THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD; A TALE.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

SPERATE MISERI, CAVETE FELICES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAP. XX.

The history of a philosophic vagabond; pursuing novelty, but losing content.

AFTER we had supped, Mrs. Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage, which he at first seemed to decline; but, upon her pressing the request, he was obliged to inform her, that a stick and a wallet were all the moveable things upon this earth that he could boast of. "Why, ay, my son," cried I, "you left "me but poor, and poor I find you are come back; "and yet I make no doubt you have seen a great "deal of the world." "Yes, Sir," replied my son; "but travelling after Fortune is not the way to secure "her; and, indeed, of late, I have desisted from the "pursuit." "I fancy, Sir," cried Mrs. Arnold, "that the account of your adventures would be "amusing: the first part of them I have often heard "from my niece; but could the company prevail "for the rest, it would be an additional obligation." "Madam," replied my son, "I promise you, the pleasure you have in hearing, will not be half so great

as my vanity in reciting them; and yet, in the whole narrative, I can ſcarce promiſe you one adventure, as my account is rather of what I ſaw, than what I did. The firſt misfortune of my life, which you all know, was great; but, though it diſtreſſed, it could not ſink me. No perſon ever had a better knack at hoping than I. The leſs kind I found Fortune at one time, the more I expected from her at another; and, being now at the bottom of her wheel, every new revolution might lift, but could not depreſs me. I proceeded, therefore, towards London, in a fine morning, no way uneaſy about to morrow, but cheerful as the birds that carol'd by the road, and comforted myſelf with reflecting, that London was the true mart, where abilities of every kind were ſure of meeting diſtinction and reward.

"Upon my arrival in town, Sir, my firſt care was to deliver your letter of recommendation to our couſin, who was himſelf in little better circumſtances than I. My firſt ſcheme, you know, Sir, was to be uſher at an academy, and I aſked his advice in the affair. Our couſin received the propoſal with a true Sardonic grin." "Ay," cried he, "this is indeed a very pretty career that has been chalked out for you. I have been an uſher at a boarding-ſchool myſelf; and may I die by an anodyne necklace, but I had rather be an under turnkey in Newgate. I was up early and late: I was brow-beat by the maſter, hated for my ugly face by the miſtreſs, worried by the boys within, and never permitted to ſtir out to meet civility abroad. But are you ſure you are fit for a ſchool? Let me examine you a little.

Have

Have you been bred apprentice to the buſineſs? No. Then you won't do for a ſchool. Can you dreſs the boy's hair? No. Then you won't do for a ſchool. Have you had the ſmall-pox? No. Then you won't do for a ſchool. Can you lie three in a bed? No. Then you will never do for a ſchool. Have you got a good ſtomach? Yes. Then you will by no means do for a ſchool. No, Sir, if you are for a genteel, eaſy profeſſion, bind yourſelf ſeven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's wheel; but avoid a ſchool by any means. Yet come," continued he, "I ſee you are a lad of ſpirit and ſome learning: what do you think of commencing author, like me? You have read in books, no doubt, of men of genius ſtarving at the trade: at preſent, I'll ſhow you forty very dull fellows about town that live by it in opulence. All honeſt dog-trot men, who go on ſmoothly and dully, and write hiſtory and politics, and are praiſed; men, Sir, who, had they been bred coblers, would all their lives have only mended ſhoes, but never made them."

"Finding that there was no great degree of gentility affixed to the character of an uſher, I reſolved to accept his propoſal; and, having the higheſt reſpect for literature, hailed the *antiqua mater* of Grub-ſtreet with reverence. I thought it my glory to purſue a tract which Dryden and Otway trod before me. I conſidered the goddeſs of this region as the parent of excellence; and however an intercourſe with the world might give us good ſenſe, the poverty ſhe granted I ſuppoſed to be the nurſe of genius? Big with theſe reflections, I ſat down, and finding that the

the beſt things remained to be ſaid on the wrong ſide, I reſolved to write a book that ſhould be wholly new. I therefore dreſſed up three paradoxes with ſome ingenuity. They were falſe, indeed, but they were new. The jewels of truth have been ſo often imported by others, that nothing was left for me to import, but ſome ſplendid things, that, at a diſtance, looked every bit as well. Witneſs, ye powers, what fancied importance ſat perched upon my quill while I was writing. The whole learned world, I made no doubt, would riſe to oppoſe my ſyſtem; but then I was prepared to oppoſe the whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I ſat ſelf-collected, with a quill pointed againſt every oppoſer."

"Well ſaid, my boy," cried I; "and what ſubject did you treat upon? I hope you did not paſs over the importance of monogamy. But I interrupt, go on: you publiſhed your paradoxes; well, and what did the learned world ſay to your paradoxes?"

"Sir," replied my ſon, "the learned world ſaid nothing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, Sir. Every man of them was employed in praiſing his friends and himſelf, or condemning his enemies; and unfortunately, as I had neither, I ſuffered the cruelleſt mortification, neglect.

"As I was meditating one day in a coffee-houſe on the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happening to enter the room, placed himſelf in the box before me, and, after ſome preliminary diſcourſe, finding me to be a ſcholar, drew out a bundle of propoſals, begging me to ſubſcribe to a new edition he was going

ing to give the world of Propertius, with notes. This demand neceſſarily produced a reply, that I had no money; and that confeſſion led him to inquire into the nature of my expectations. Finding that my expectations were juſt as great as my purſe, I ſee, cried he, you are unacquainted with the town, I'll teach you a part of it. Look at theſe propoſals; upon theſe very propoſals I have ſubſiſted very comfortably for twelve years. The moment a nobleman returns from his travels, a Creolian arrives from Jamaica, or a Dowager from her country-ſeat, I ſtrike for a ſubſcription. I firſt beſiege their hearts with flattery, and then pour in my propoſals at the breach. If they ſubſcribe readily the firſt time, I renew my requeſt to beg a dedication-fee. If they let me have that, I ſmite them once more for engraving their coat of arms at the top. Thus, continued he, I live by vanity, and laugh at it. But, between ourſelves, I am now too well known; I ſhould be glad to borrow your face a bit: a nobleman of diſtinction has juſt returned from Italy; my face is familiar to his porter; but if you bring this copy of verſes, my life for it you ſucceed, and we divide the ſpoil."

"Bleſs us, George," cried I, "and is this the "employment of poets now? Do men of their ex-"alted talents thus ſtoop to beggary? Can they ſo "far diſgrace their calling, as to make a vile traffic "of praiſe for bread?"

"O no, Sir," returned he; "a true poet can never be ſo baſe; for, wherever there is genius, there is pride. The creatures I now deſcribe, are only beggars in rhyme. The real poet, as he braves every hardſhip

hardſhip for fame, ſo he is equally a coward to contempt; and none but thoſe who are unworthy protection condeſcend to ſolicit it.

"Having a mind too proud to ſtoop to ſuch indignities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard a ſecond attempt for fame, I was now obliged to take a middle courſe, and write for bread. But I was unqualified for a profeſſion where mere induſtry alone was to enſure ſucceſs. I could not ſuppreſs my lurking paſſion for applauſe; but uſually conſumed that time in efforts after excellence, which takes up but little room, when it ſhould have been more advantageouſly employed in the diffuſive productions of fruitful mediocrity. My little piece would therefore come forth in the midſt of periodical publications, unnoticed and unknown. The public were more importantly employed, than to obſerve the eaſy ſimplicity of my ſtyle, or the harmony of my periods. Sheet after ſheet was thrown off to oblivion. My eſſays were buried among the eſſays upon liberty, eaſtern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog: while Philautos, Philalethes, Philelutheros, and Philanthropos, all wrote better, becauſe they wrote faſter than I.

"Now, therefore, I began to aſſociate with none but diſappointed authors like myſelf, who praiſed, deplored, and deſpiſed each other. The ſatisfaction we found in every celebrated writer's attempts was inverſely as their merits. I found that no genius in another could pleaſe me. My unfortunate paradoxes had entirely dried up that ſource of comfort. I could neither read nor write with ſatisfaction; for excellence

excellence in another was my averſion, and writing was my trade.

"In the midſt of theſe gloomy reflections, as I was one day ſitting on a bench in St. James's Park, a young gentleman of diſtinction, who had been my intimate acquaintance at the univerſity, approached me. We ſaluted each other with ſome heſitation; he almoſt aſhamed of being known to one who made ſo ſhabby an appearance, and I afraid of a repulſe. But my ſuſpicions ſoon vaniſhed; for Ned Thornhill was at the bottom a very good-natured fellow."

"What did you ſay, George?" interrupted I, "Thornhill, was not that his name? It can certain-"ly be no other than my landlord."—"Bleſs me," cried Mrs. Arnold, "is Mr. Thornhill ſo near a "neighbour of yours? He has long been a friend "in our family, and we expect a viſit from him "ſhortly."

"My friend's firſt care," continued my ſon, "was to alter my appearance by a very fine ſuit of his own clothes, and then I was admitted to his table, upon the footing of half friend, half underling. My buſineſs was to attend him at auctions, to put him in ſpirits when he ſat for his picture, to take the left hand in his chariot when not filled by another, and to aſſiſt at tattering a kip, as the phraſe was, when we had a mind for a frolic. Beſides theſe, I had twenty other little employments in the family. I was to do many ſmall things without bidding; to carry the cork-ſcrew; to ſtand godfather to all the butler's children; to ſing when I was bid; to be never out

of

of humour; always to be humble; and, if, I could, to be very happy.

"In this honourable poſt, however, I was not without a rival. A captain of marines, who was formed for the place by nature, oppoſed me in my patron's affections. His mother had been laundreſs to a man of quality, and thus he early acquired a taſte for pimping and pedigree. As this gentleman made it the ſtudy of his life to be acquainted with lords, though he was diſmiſſed from ſeveral for his ſtupidity, yet he found many of them, who were as dull as himſelf, that permitted his aſſiduities. As flattery was his trade, he practiſed it with the eaſieſt addreſs imaginable; but it came aukward and ſtiff from me: and as, every day, my patron's deſire of flattery increaſed; ſo, every hour, being better acquainted with his defects, I became more unwilling to give it. Thus I was once more fairly going to give up the field to the Captain, when my friend found occaſion for my aſſiſtance. This was nothing leſs than to fight a duel for him, with a gentleman whoſe ſiſter it was pretended he had uſed ill. I readily complied with his requeſt; and though I ſee you are diſpleaſed at my conduct, yet as it was a debt indiſpenſably due to friendſhip, I could not refuſe. I undertook the affair, diſarmed my antagoniſt, and ſoon after had the pleaſure of finding that the lady was only a woman of the town, and the fellow her bully and a ſharper. This piece of ſervice was repaid with the warmeſt profeſſions of gratitude; but as my friend was to leave town in a few days, he knew no other method of ſerving me, but by recommending

commending me to his uncle Sir William Thornhill, and another nobleman of great diſtinction, who enjoyed a poſt under the government. When he was gone, my firſt care was to carry his recommendatory letter to his uncle, a man whoſe character for every virtue was univerſal, yet juſt. I was received by his ſervants with the moſt hoſpitable ſmiles; for the looks of the domeſtics ever tranſmit their maſter's benevolence. Being ſhown into a grand apartment, where Sir William ſoon came to me, I delivered my meſſage and letter, which he read; and after pauſing ſome minutes, Pray, Sir, cried he, inform me what you have done for my kinſman, to deſerve this warm recommendation? But I ſuppoſe, Sir, I gueſs your merits, you have fought for him; and ſo you would expect a reward from me, for being the inſtrument of his vices. I wiſh, ſincerely wiſh, that my preſent refuſal may be ſome puniſhment for your guilt; but ſtill more, that it may be ſome inducement to your repentance. The ſeverity of this rebuke I bore patiently, becauſe I knew it was juſt. My whole expectations now, therefore, lay in my letter to the great man. As the doors of the nobility are almoſt ever beſet with beggars, all ready to thruſt in ſome ſly petition, I found it no eaſy matter to gain admittance. However, after bribing the ſervants with half my worldly fortune, I was at laſt ſhown into a ſpacious apartment, my letter being previouſly ſent up for his Lordſhip's inſpection. During this anxious interval, I had full time to look round me. Every thing was grand, and of happy contrivance; the painting, the furniture, the gild-

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ings, petrified me with awe, and raiſed my idea of the owner. Ah! thought I to myſelf, how very great muſt the poſſeſſor of all theſe things be, who carries in his head the buſineſs of ſtate, and whoſe houſe diſplays half the wealth of a kingdom: ſure his genius muſt be unfathomable! During theſe awful reflections, I heard a ſtep come heavily forward. Ah! this is the great man himſelf! No, it was only a chambermaid. Another foot was heard ſoon after. This muſt be He! No, it was only the great man's valet-de-chambre. At laſt his lordſhip actually made his appearance. Are you, cried he, the bearer of this here letter? I anſwered with a bow. I learn by this, continued he, as how that——But juſt at this inſtant a ſervant delivered him a card, and without taking farther notice, he went out of the room, and left me to digeſt my own happineſs at leiſure. I ſaw no more of him, till told by a footman, that his Lordſhip was going to his coach at the door. Down I immediately followed, and joined my voice to that of three or four more, who came, like me, to petition for favours. His Lordſhip, however, went too faſt for us, and was gaining his chariot-door with large ſtrides, when I hallooed out to know if I was to have any reply. He was by this time got in, and muttered an anſwer, half of which only I heard, the other half was loſt in the rattling of the chariot-wheels. I ſtood for ſome time with my neck ſtretched out, in the poſture of one that was liſtening to catch the glorious ſound, till, looking round me, I found myſelf alone at his Lordſhip's gate.

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"My patience," continued my ſon, "was now quite exhauſted: ſtung with the thouſand indignities I had met with, I was willing to caſt myſelf away, and only wanted the gulph to receive me. I regarded myſelf as one of thoſe vile things that nature deſigned ſhould be thrown by into a lumber-room, there to periſh in obſcurity. I had ſtill, however, half a guinea left, and of that I thought fortune herſelf ſhould not deprive me: but in order to be ſure of this, I was reſolved to go inſtantly and ſpend it while I had it, and then truſt to occurrences for the reſt. As I was going along with this reſolution, it happened that Mr. Criſpe's office ſeemed invitingly open to give me a welcome reception. In this office Mr. Criſpe kindly offers all his Majeſty's ſubjects a generous promiſe of thirty pounds a-year; for which promiſe all they give in return is their liberty for life, and permiſſion to let him tranſport them to America as ſlaves. I was happy at finding a place where I could loſe my fears in deſperation, and entered this cell (for it had the appearance of one) with the devotion of a monaſtic. Here I found a number of poor creatures all in circumſtances like myſelf, expecting the arrival of Mr. Criſpe, preſenting a true epitome of Engliſh impatience. Each untractable ſoul at variance with Fortune, wreaked her injuries on their own hearts: but Mr. Criſpe at laſt came down and all our murmurs were huſhed. He deigned to regard me with an air of peculiar approbation; and indeed he was the firſt man, who, for a month paſt, talked to me with ſmiles. After a few queſtions he found I was fit for every thing

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in the world. He paused a while upon the properest means of providing for me; and slapping his forehead as if he had found it, assured me, that there was at that time an embassy talked of, from the synod of Pensylvania to the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my own heart that the fellow lyed, and yet his promise gave me pleasure, there was something so magnificent in the sound. I fairly, therefore, divided my half guinea, one half of which went to be added to his thirty thousand pounds; and with the other half I resolved to go to the next tavern, to be there more happy than he.

"As I was going out with that resolution, I was met at the door by the captain of a ship, with whom I had formerly some little acquaintance, and he agreed to be my companion over a bowl of punch. As I never chose to make a secret of my circumstances, he assured me, that I was upon the very point of ruin, in listening to the office-keeper's promises; for that he only designed to sell me to the plantations. But, continued he, I fancy you might, by a much shorter voyage, be very easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take my advice. My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam; What if you go in her as a passenger? The moment you land, all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen English, and I'll warrant you'll get pupils and money enough. I suppose you understand English, added he, by this time, or the deuce is in it. I confidently assured him of that; but expressed a doubt whether

whether the Dutch would be willing to learn Engliſh. He affirmed with an oath, that they were fond of it to diſtraction; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his propoſal, and embarked the next day, to teach the Dutch Engliſh in Holland. The wind was fair, our voyage ſhort, and after having paid my paſſage with half my moveables, I found myſelf, fallen as from the ſkies, a ſtranger in one of the principal ſtreets of Amſterdam. In this ſituation, I was unwilling to let any time paſs unemployed in teaching; I addreſſed myſelf therefore to two or three of thoſe I met, whoſe appearance ſeemed moſt promiſing; but it was impoſſible to make ourſelves mutually underſtood. It was not till this very moment I recollected, that, in order to teach Dutchmen Engliſh, it was neceſſary that they ſhould firſt teach me Dutch. How I came to overlook ſo obvious an objection, is to me amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

"This ſcheme thus blown up, I had ſome thoughts of fairly ſhipping back to England again; but happening into company with an Iriſh ſtudent, who was returning from Louvain, our converſation turning upon topics of literature, (for by the way it may be obſerved, that I always forgot the meanneſs of my circumſtances when I could converſe upon ſuch ſubjects,) from him I learned, that there were not two men in his whole univerſity who underſtood Greek. This amazed me. I inſtantly reſolved to travel to Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek; and in this deſign I was heartened by my brother ſtudent,

ſtudent, who threw out ſome hints that a fortune might be got by it.

"I ſet boldly forward the next morning. Every day leſſened the burden of my moveables, like Æſop and his baſket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Louvain, I was reſolved not to go ſneaking to the low profeſſors, but openly tendered my talents to the principal himſelf. I went, had admittance, and offered him my ſervice as a maſter of the Greek language, which I had been told was a deſideratum in his univerſity. The principal ſeemed at firſt to doubt of my abilities; but of theſe I offered to convince him, by turning a part of any Greek author he ſhould fix upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earneſt in my propoſal, he addreſſed me thus:" "You ſee me, young man, continued he, "I never learned Greek; I have had a doctor's cap "and gown without Greek; I have ten thouſand "florins a-year without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek: and in ſhort, continued he, as I don't "know Greek, I do not believe there is any good "in it."

"I was now too far from home to think of returning; ſo I reſolved to go forward. I had ſome knowledge of muſic, with a tolerable voice, and now turned what was once my amuſement into a preſent means of ſubſiſtence. I paſſed among the harmleſs peaſants of Flanders, and among ſuch of the French as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever found them ſprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peaſant's houſe

houſe towards night-fall, I played one of my moſt merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but ſubſiſtence for the next day. I only once or twice attempted to play for people of faſhion, but they always thought my performance odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle. This was to me the more extraordinary, as whenever I uſed in better days, to play for company, when playing was my amuſement, my muſic never failed to throw them into raptures, and the ladies eſpecially; but as it was now my only means, it was received with contempt: a proof how ready the world is to under-rate thoſe talents by which a man is ſupported.

"In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no deſign but juſt to look about me, and then to go forward. The people of Paris are much fonder of ſtrangers that have money than of thoſe that have wit. As I could not boaſt much of either, I was no great favourite. After walking about the town four or five days, and ſeeing the outſides of the beſt houſes, I was preparing to leave this retreat of venal hoſpitality, when, paſſing through one of the principal ſtreets, whom ſhould I meet but our couſin, to whom you firſt recommended me. This meeting was very agreeable to me, and I believe not diſpleaſing to him. He inquired into the nature of my journey to Paris, and informed me of his own buſineſs there, which was to collect pictures, medals, intaglios, and antiques of all kinds, for a gentleman in London, who had juſt ſtept into taſte and a large fortune. I was the more ſurpriſed at ſeeing

ing our couſin pitched upon for this office, as he himſelf had often aſſured me he knew nothing of the matter. Upon aſking how he had been taught the art of a connoſcento ſo very ſuddenly, he aſſured me that nothing was more eaſy. The whole ſecret conſiſted in a ſtrict adherence to two rules; the one always to obſerve, that the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains; and the other, to praiſe the works of Pietro Perugnio. But, ſays he, as I once taught you how to be an author in London, I'll now undertake to inſtruct you in the art of picture-buying at Paris.

"With this propoſal I very readily cloſed, as it was a living; and now all my ambition was to live. I went therefore to his lodgings, improved my dreſs by his aſſiſtance, and, after ſome time, accompanied him to auctions of pictures, where the Engliſh gentry were expected to be purchaſers. I was not a little ſurpriſed at his intimacy with people of the beſt faſhion, who referred themſelves to his judgment upon every picture or medal, as to an unerring ſtandard of taſte. He made very good uſe of my aſſiſtance upon theſe occaſions; for, when aſked his opinion, he would gravely take me aſide, and aſk mine; ſhrug, look wiſe, return, and aſſure the company, that he could give no opinion upon an affair of ſo much importance. Yet there was ſometimes an occaſion for a more ſupported aſſurance. I remember to have ſeen him, after giving his opinion that the colouring of a picture was not mellow enough, very, deliberately take a bruſh with brown varniſh

varniſh that was accidentally lying by, and rub it over the piece with great compoſure before all the company, and then aſk if he had not improved the tints?

"When he had finiſhed his commiſſion in Paris, he left me ſtrongly recommended to ſeveral men of diſtinction, as a perſon very proper for a travelling tutor: and, after ſome time, I was employed in that capacity by a gentleman who brought his ward to Paris, in order to ſet him forward on his tour through Europe. I was to be the young gentleman's governor, but with a proviſo, that he ſhould always be permitted to govern himſelf. My pupil, in fact, underſtood the art of guiding, in money concerns, much better than I. He was heir to a fortune of about two hundred thouſand pounds, left him by an uncle in the Weſt Indies; and his guardians, to qualify him for the management of it, had bound him apprentice to an attorney. Thus avarice was his prevailing paſſion: and all his queſtions on the road were, how money might be ſaved? which was the leaſt expenſive courſe of travel? whether any thing could be bought that would turn to account when diſpoſed of again in London? Such curioſities on the way as could be ſeen for nothing he was ready enough to look at; but if the ſight of them was to be paid for, he uſually aſſerted, that he had been told they were not worth ſeeing. He never paid a bill, that he would not obſerve how amazingly expenſive travelling was; and all this, though he was not yet twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as we took a walk to look at the port and

ſhipping, he enquired the expence of the paſſage by ſea home to England. This, he was informed, was but a trifle, compared to his returning by land; he was therefore unable to withſtand the temptation; ſo, paying me the ſmall part of my ſalary that was due, he took leave, and embarked with only one attendant for London.

"I now, therefore, was left once more upon the world at large; but then it was a thing I was uſed to. However, my ſkill in muſic could avail me nothing, in a country where every peaſant was a better muſician than I; but, by this time, I had acquired another talent, which anſwered my purpoſe as well, and this was a ſkill in diſputation. In all the foreign univerſities and convents, there are, upon certain days, philoſophical theſes maintained againſt every adventitious diſputant; for which, if the champion oppoſes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner, therefore, I fought my way towards England, walked along from city to city, examined mankind more nearly, and, if I may ſo expreſs it, ſaw both ſides of the picture. My remarks, however, are but few. I found that monarchy was the beſt government for the poor to live in, and commonwealths for the rich. I found that riches, in general, were, in every country, another name for freedom; and that no man is ſo fond of liberty himſelf, as not to be deſirous of ſubjecting the will of ſome individuals in ſociety to his own.

"Upon

"Upon my arrival in England, I reſolved to pay my reſpects firſt to you, and then to enliſt as a volunteer in the firſt expedition that was going forward; but, on my journey down, my reſolutions were changed, by meeting an old acquaintance, who, I found, belonged to a company of comedians, that were going to make a ſummer campaign in the country. The company ſeemed not much to diſapprove of me for an aſſociate. They all, however, appriſed me of the importance of the taſk at which I aimed: that the public was a many-headed monſter, and that only ſuch as had very good heads could pleaſe it: that acting was not to be learned in a day: and that, without ſome traditional ſhrugs, which had been on the ſtage, and only on the ſtage, theſe hundred years, I could never pretend to pleaſe. The next difficulty was in fitting me with parts, as almoſt every character was in keeping. I was driven, for ſome time, from one character to another, till at laſt Horatio was fixed upon, which the preſence of the preſent company has happily hindered me from acting."

CHAP. XXI.

The ſhort continuance of friendſhip amongſt the vicious, which is coeval only with mutual ſatisfaction.

MY ſon's account was too long to be delivered at once; the firſt part of it was begun that night, and he was concluding the reſt after dinner the next day, when the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at the door ſeemed to make a pauſe in the general ſatisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me with a whiſper, that the Squire had already made ſome overtures to Miſs Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle ſeemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr. Thornhill's entering, he ſeemed, at ſeeing my ſon and me, to ſtart back; but I readily imputed that to ſurpriſe, and not diſpleaſure. However, upon our advancing to ſalute him, he returned our greeting with the moſt apparent candour; and, after a ſhort time, his preſence ſerved only to increaſe the general good humour.

After tea, he called me aſide, to enquire after my daughter; but upon my informing him that my inquiry was unſucceſsful, he ſeemed greatly ſurpriſed; adding, that he had been ſince frequently at my houſe, in order to comfort the reſt of my family, whom he left perfectly well. He then aſked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miſs Wilmot, or my ſon; and upon my replying that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence

and

and precaution, desiring me by all means to keep it a secret: "For, at best," cried he, "it is but di-"vulging one's own infamy; and perhaps Miss "Livy may not be so guilty as we all imagine." We were here interrupted by a servant who came to ask the Squire in, to stand up at country-dances; so that he left me quite pleased with the interest he seemed to take in my concerns. His addresses, however, to Miss Wilmot were too obvious to be mistaken; and yet she seemed not perfectly pleased; but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt, than from real inclination. I had even the satisfaction to see her lavish some kind looks upon my unfortunate son, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor assiduity. Mr. Thornhill's seeming composure, however, not a little surprised me: we had now continued here a week, at the pressing instances of Mr. Arnold; but each day the more tenderness Miss Wilmot showed my son, Mr. Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him.

He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone. The morning I designed for my departure, Mr. Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleasure, to inform me of a piece of service he had done for his friend George. This was nothing less than his having procured him an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West

Indies, for which he had promiſed but one hundred pounds, his intereſt having been ſufficient to get an abatement of the other two. "As for this trifling "piece of ſervice," continued the young gentleman, "I deſire no other reward but the pleaſure of "having ſerved my friend; and as for the hundred "pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raiſe it "yourſelves, I will advance it, and you ſhall repay "me at your leiſure." This was a favour we wanted words to expreſs our ſenſe of: I readily, therefore, gave my bond for the money, and teſtified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day, to ſecure his commiſſion in purſuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to uſe diſpatch, leſt, in the mean time, another ſhould ſtep in with more advantageous propoſals. The next morning, therefore, our young ſoldier was early prepared for his departure, and ſeemed the only perſon among us that was not affected by it. Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and miſtreſs (for Miſs Wilmot actually loved him) he was leaving behind, any way damped his ſpirits. After he had taken leave of the reſt of the company, I gave him all I had, my bleſſing. "And now, my boy," cried I, "thou art going to fight for thy country; remem-"ber how thy brave grand-father fought for his "ſacred king, when loyalty among Britons was a "virtue. Go, my boy, and imitate him in all but "his misfortunes, if it was a misfortune to die with

"Lord

" Lord Falkland. Go, my boy, and if you fall, " though diſtant, expoſed and unwept by thoſe that " love you, the moſt precious tears are thoſe with " which heaven bedews the unburied head of a ſol- " dier."

The next morning I took leave of the good family that had been kind enough to entertain me ſo long, not without ſeveral expreſſions of gratitude to Mr. Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happineſs which affluence and good breeding procure, and returned towards home, deſpairing of ever finding my daughter more, but ſending a ſigh to heaven to ſpare and to forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired an horſe to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myſelf with the hopes of ſoon ſeeing all I held deareſt upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-houſe by the road ſide, and aſked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We ſat beſide his kitchen fire, which was the beſt room in the houſe, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened, among other topics, to talk of young Squire Thornhill, whom the hoſt aſſured me was hated as much as his uncle Sir William, who ſometimes came down to the country, was loved. He went on to obſerve, that he made it his whole ſtudy to betray the daughters of ſuch as received him to their houſes, and after a fortnight or three weeks poſſeſſion, turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world. As we continued our diſcourſe in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and perceiving

ceiving that her huſband was enjoying a pleaſure in which ſhe was not a ſharer, ſhe aſked him, in an angry tone, what he did there? To which he only replied in an ironical way, by drinking her health. "Mr. Symmonds," cried ſhe, "you uſe me very "ill, and I'll bear it no longer. Here three parts "of the buſineſs is left for me to do, and the fourth "left unfiniſhed, while you do nothing but ſoak "with the gueſts all day long; whereas, if a ſpoon-"ful of liquor were to cure me of a fever, I never "touch a drop." I now found what ſhe would be at, and immediately poured her out a glaſs, which ſhe received with a curtſey, and drinking towards my good health, "Sir," reſumed ſhe, "it is not ſo "much for the value of the liquor I am angry; but "one cannot help it, when the houſe is going out "of the windows. If the cuſtomers or gueſts are to "be dunned, all the burden lies upon my back; "he'd as lief eat that glaſs as budge after them him-"ſelf. There now, above ſtairs, we have a young "woman who has come to take up her lodgings "here, and I don't believe ſhe has got any money by "her over civility. I am certain ſhe is very ſlow of "payment, and I wiſh ſhe were put in mind of it." "What ſignifies minding her?" cried the hoſt; "if "ſhe be ſlow, ſhe is ſure."—"I don't know that," replied the wife; "but I know that I am ſure ſhe "has been here a fortnight, and we have not yet "ſeen the colour of her money."——"I ſuppoſe, "my dear," cried he, "we ſhall have it all in a "lump."—"In a lump!" cried the other, "I hope "we may get it any way; and that I am reſolved

"we

"we will this very night, or out ſhe tramps, bag "and baggage."—"Conſider, my dear," cried the huſband, "ſhe is a gentlewoman, and deſerves more "reſpect."—"As for the matter of that," cried the hoſteſs, "gentle or ſimple, out ſhe ſhall pack with "a ſaſſarara. Gentry may be good things where "they take; but, for my part, I never ſaw much "good of them at the ſign of the Harrow."

Thus ſaying, ſhe ran up a narrow flight of ſtairs, that went from the kitchen to a room over-head; and I ſoon perceived, by the loudneſs of her voice, and the bitterneſs of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear her remonſtrances very diſtinctly: "Out, I ſay; pack out this "moment; tramp, thou infamous ſtrumpet, or I'll "give thee a mark thou won't be the better for this "three months. What! you trumpery, to come "and take up an honeſt houſe, without croſs or "coin to bleſs yourſelf with! Come along, I ſay." "O dear Madam," cried the ſtranger, "pity me; "pity a poor abandoned creature for one night, "and death will ſoon do the reſt."——I inſtantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child, Olivia. I flew to her reſcue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.—"Welcome, any way wel-"come, my deareſt loſt one, my treaſure, to your "poor old father's boſom. Though the vicious for-"ſake thee, there is yet one in the world that will "never forſake thee; though thou hadſt ten thou-"ſand crimes to anſwer for, he will forget them "all."——"O my own dear"—for minutes ſhe

could no more—"my own deareſt good Pappa! "Could angels be kinder! How do I deſerve ſo "much! The villain! I hate him and myſelf, to be "a reproach to ſuch goodneſs. You can't forgive "me: I know you cannot."——"Yes, my child, "from my heart I do forgive thee! Only repent, "and we both ſhall yet be happy. We ſhall ſee "many pleaſant days yet, my Olivia."——"Ah! "never, Sir, never. The reſt of my wretched life "muſt be infamy abroad, and ſhame at home. "But, alas! Pappa, you look much paler than you "uſed to do. Could ſuch a thing as I am give "you ſo much uneaſineſs? Sure you have too "much wiſdom to take the miſeries of my guilt up-"on yourſelf?"——"Our wiſdom, young woman," replied I——"Ah! why ſo cold a name, Pappa?" cried ſhe, "This is the firſt time you ever called "me by ſo cold a name."—"I aſk pardon, my dar-"ling," returned I; "but I was going to obſerve, "that wiſdom makes but a ſlow defence againſt trou-"ble, though at laſt a ſure one."

The landlady now returned, to know if we did not chooſe a more genteel apartment; to which aſſenting, we were ſhown a room, where we could converſe more freely. After we had talked ourſelves into ſome degree of tranquillity, I could not avoid deſiring ſome account of the gradations that led to her preſent wretched ſituation. "That villain, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "from the firſt day of our meeting made "honourable, though private propoſals."

"Villain indeed!" cried I; "and yet it in ſome "meaſure ſurpriſes me, how a perſon of Mr. Bur-

"chell's

"chell's good ſenſe, and ſeeming honour, could be "guilty of ſuch deliberate baſeneſs, and thus ſtep "into a family to undo it."

"My dear Pappa," returned my daughter, "you "labour under a ſtrange miſtake; Mr. Burchell never "attempted to deceive me. Inſtead of that, he took "every opportunity of privately admoniſhing me a-"gainſt the artifices of Mr. Thornhill, who, I now "find, was even worſe than he repreſented him."— "Mr. Thornhill!" interrupted I; "can it be?"— "Yes, Sir," returned ſhe; "it was Mr. Thornhill "who ſeduced me, who employed the two ladies, "as he called them, but who, in fact, were aban-"doned women of the town, without breeding or "pity, to decoy us up to London. Their artifices, "you may remember, would have certainly ſuc-"ceeded, but for Mr. Burchell's letter, who directed "thoſe reproaches at them, which we all applied to "ourſelves. How he came to have ſo much influ-"ence as to defeat their intentions, ſtill remains a "ſecret to me; but I am convinced he was ever "our warmeſt, ſincereſt friend."

"You amaze me, my dear," cried I; "but now "I find my firſt ſuſpicions of Mr. Thornhill's baſe-"neſs were too well-grounded: but he can triumph "in ſecurity; for he is rich, and we are poor. But "tell me, my child, ſure it was no ſmall tempta-"tion that could thus obliterate all the impreſſions "of ſuch an education, and ſo virtuous a diſpoſi-"tion as thine."

"Indeed, Sir," replied ſhe, "he owes all his tri-"umph of the deſiring I had of making him, and not

"myſelf,

" myſelf, happy. I knew that the ceremony of our " marriage, which was privately performed by a " Popiſh prieſt, was no way binding, and that I had " nothing to truſt to but his honour." " What," interrupted I, " and were you indeed married by a " prieſt, and in orders?" " Indeed, Sir, we were," replied ſhe, " though we were both ſworn to con- " ceal his name."—" Why, then, my child, come " to my arms again; and now you are a thouſand " times more welcome than before; for you are " now his wife, to all intents and purpoſes; nor " can all the laws of man, though written on tables " of adamant, leſſen the force of that ſacred con- " nection."

" Alas, Pappa," replied ſhe, " you are but little " acquainted with his villanies: he has been marri- " ed already, by the ſame prieſt, to ſix or eight " wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and " abandoned."

" Has he ſo?" cried I; " then we muſt hang the " prieſt, and you ſhall inform againſt him to-mor- " row."—" But, Sir," returned ſhe, " will that be " right, when I am ſworn to ſecrecy?"—" My " dear," I replied, " if you have made ſuch a pro- " miſe, I cannot, nor will I tempt you to break it. " Even though it may benefit the public, you muſt " not inform againſt him. In all human inſtitu- " tions, a ſmaller evil is allowed, to procure a " greater good; as in politics, a province may be " given away, to ſecure a kingdom; in medicine, a " limb may be lopt off, to preſerve the body. But " in religion, the law is written, and inflexible, *ne-*

" *ver*

"ver to do evil. And this law, my child, is right; "for, otherwiſe, if we commit a ſmaller evil, to "procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus "incurred, in expectation of contingent advantage. "And though the advantage ſhould certainly follow, "yet the interval between commiſſion and advan-"tage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that "in which we are called away to anſwer for the "things we have done, and the volume of human "actions is cloſed for ever. But I interrupt you, my "dear; go on."

"The very next morning," continued ſhe, "I "found what little expectations I was to have from "his ſincerity. That very morning, he introduced "me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, "he had deceived, but who lived in contented pro-"ſtitution. I loved him too tenderly, to bear ſuch "rivals in his affections; and ſtrove to forget my in-"famy in a tumult of pleaſures. With this view, I "danced, dreſſed, and talked; but ſtill was unhap-"py. The gentlemen who viſited there, told me, "every moment, of the power of my charms; and "this only continued to increaſe my melancholy, as "I had thrown all their power quite away. Thus, "each day I grew more penſive, and he more info-"lent, till at laſt the monſter had the aſſurance to "offer me to a young Baronet of his acquaintance. "Need I deſcribe, Sir, how his ingratitude ſtung "me? My anſwer to this propoſal was almoſt mad-"neſs. I deſired to part. As I was going, he of-"fered me a purſe; but I flung it at him with in-"dignation, and burſt from him in a rage, that for a

"while

"while kept me inſenſible of the miſeries of my ſitu-
"ation. But I ſoon looked round me, and ſaw
"myſelf a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one
"friend in the world to apply to.

"Juſt in that interval a ſtage-coach happening to
"paſs by, I took a place, it being my only aim to
"be driven at a diſtance from a wretch I deſpiſed
"and deteſted. I was ſet down here, where, ſince
"my arrival, my own anxiety, and this woman's un-
"kindneſs, have been my only companions. The
"hours of pleaſure that I have paſſed with my Mam-
"ma and ſiſter, now grow painful to me. Their
"ſorrows are much, but mine is greater than their's;
"for mine is mixed with guilt and infamy."

"Have patience, my child," cried I, "and I
"hope things will yet be better. Take ſome re-
"poſe to-night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home
"to your mother, and the reſt of the family, from
"whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor
"woman! this has gone to her heart: but ſhe loves
"you ſtill, Olivia, and will forget it."

CHAP. XXII.

Offences are eaſily pardoned, where there is love at bottom.

THE next morning I took my daughter behind me, and ſet out on my return home. As we travelled along, I ſtrove, by every perſuaſion, to calm

calm her ſorrows and fears, and to arm her with reſolution to bear the preſence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the proſpect of a fine country through which we paſſed, to obſerve how much kinder Heaven was to us than we to each other; and, that the misfortunes of Nature's making were very few. I aſſured her, that ſhe ſhould never perceive any change in my affections; and that, during my life, which yet might be long, ſhe might depend upon a guardian and an inſtructor. I armed her againſt the cenſures of the world; ſhowed her, that books were ſweet unreproaching companions to the miſerable; and that, if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at leaſt teach us to endure it.

The hired horſe that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my houſe; and, as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed ſtage: however, after ſeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hoſteſs to prepare proper refreſhments, I kiſſed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new ſenſations of pleaſure, the nearer I approached that peaceful manſion. As a bird that had been frighted from its neſt, my affections outwent my haſte, and hovered round my little fire-ſide with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to ſay, and anticipated the

welcome

welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and ſmiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but ſlowly, the night waned apace. The labourers of the day were all retired to reſt; the lights were out in every cottage; no ſounds were heard, but of the ſhrilling cock, and the deep-mouthed watch-dog, at hollow diſtance. I approached my little abode with pleaſure, and, before I was within a furlong of the place, our honeſt maſtiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near mid-night that I came to knock at my door: all was ſtill and ſilent: my heart dilated with unutterable happineſs, when, to my amazement, I ſaw the houſe burſting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulſive outcry, and fell upon the pavement inſenſible. This alarmed my ſon, who had till this been aſleep; and he, perceiving the flames, inſtantly waked my wife and daughter, and all running out naked, and wild with apprehenſion, recalled me to life with their anguiſh: but it was only to objects of new terror; for the flames had, by this time, caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family ſtood, with ſilent agony, looking on as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones; but they were not to be ſeen. "O miſery! where," cried I, "where "are my little ones?" "They are burnt to death "in the flames," ſays my wife calmly, "and I will "die with them." That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were juſt awaked by the fire

and

and nothing could have ſtopped me. "Where are "my children," cried I, ruſhing through the flames, and burſting open the door of the chamber in which they were confined, "where are my little ones?"—"Here, dear pappa, here we are," cried they together, while the flames were juſt catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and ſnatched them through the fire as faſt as poſſible, while, juſt as I was got out, the roof ſunk in. "Now," cried I, holding up my children, "now "let the flames burn on, and all my poſſeſſions pe-"riſh. Here they are; I have ſaved my treaſures. "Here, my deareſt, here are our treaſures, and we "ſhall yet be happy." We kiſſed our little darlings a thouſand times; they claſped us round the neck, and ſeemed to ſhare our tranſports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now ſtood a calm ſpectator of the flames; and, after ſome time, began to perceive that my arm, to the ſhoulder, was ſcorched in a terrible manner. It was, therefore, out of my power to give my ſon any aſſiſtance, either in attempting to ſave our goods, or preventing the flames ſpreading to our corn. By this time the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our aſſiſtance; but all they could do was to ſtand, like us, ſpectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reſerved for my daughters fortunes, were entirely conſumed, except a box with ſome papers, that ſtood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little conſequence, which my ſon brought away in the beginning. The neighbours contributed, however, what they could

to

to lighten our diſtreſs. They brought us clothes, and furniſhed one of our out houſes with kitchen utenſils; ſo that, by day-light, we had another though a wretched dwelling, to retire to. My honeſt next neighbour, and his children, were not the leaſt aſſiduous in providing us with every thing neceſſary, and offering whatever conſolation untutored benevolence could ſuggeſt.

When the fears of my family had ſubſided, curioſity to know the cauſe of my long ſtay began to take place: having, therefore, informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our loſt one; and though we had nothing but wretchedneſs now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had. This taſk would have been more difficult but for our recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myſelf, as my arm grew very painful, I ſent my ſon and daughter, who ſoon returned, ſupporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her mother, whom no inſtructions of mine could perſuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have a much ſtronger ſenſe of female error than men. "Ah, Madam!" cried her mother, "this "is but a poor place you are come to, after ſo "much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can "afford but little entertainment to perſons who "have kept company only with people of diſtinc-"tion. Yes, Miſs Livy, your poor father and I

"have

"have ſuffered very much of late; but I hope "Heaven will forgive you." During this reception, the unhappy victim ſtood pale and trembling, unable to weep, or to reply; but I could not continue a ſilent ſpectator of her diſtreſs; wherefore, aſſuming a degree of ſeverity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed with inſtant ſubmiſſion, "I intreat, woman, that my words may be now "marked once for all: I have here brought you "back a poor deluded wanderer: her return to "duty demands the revival of our tenderneſs. The "real hardſhips of life are now coming faſt upon "us; let us not, therefore, increaſe them by diſſen-"tion among each other. If we live harmoniouſly "together, we may yet be contented, as there are "enough of us to ſhut out the cenſuring world, and "keep each other in countenance. The kindneſs of "Heaven is promiſed to the penitent; and let ours "be directed by the example. Heaven, we are aſ-"ſured, is much more pleaſed to view a repentant "ſinner, than ninety-nine perſons who have ſup-"ported a courſe of undeviating rectitude. And "that is right; for that ſingle effort, by which we "ſtop ſhort in the down-hill path to perdition, is "itſelf a greater exertion of virtue than an hundred "acts of juſtice."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

None but the guilty can be long and completely miſerable.

SOME aſſiduity was now required to make our preſent abode as convenient as poſſible; and we were ſoon again qualified to enjoy our former ſerenity. Being diſabled myſelf from aſſiſting my ſon in our uſual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were ſaved, and particularly from ſuch as, by amuſing the imagination, contributed to eaſe the heart. Our good neighbours, too, came every day with the kindeſt condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to aſſiſt at repairing my former dwelling. Honeſt farmer Williams was not laſt among theſe viſitors; but heartily offered his friendſhip. He would even have renewed his addreſſes to my daughter; but ſhe rejected them in ſuch a manner as totally repreſſed his future ſolicitations. Her grief ſeemed formed for continuing; and ſhe was the only perſon of our little ſociety that a week did not reſtore to cheerfulneſs. She now loſt that unbluſhing innocence which once taught her to reſpect herſelf, and to ſeek pleaſure by pleaſing. Anxiety now had taken ſtrong poſſeſſion of her mind; her beauty began to be impaired with her conſtitution, and neglect ſtill more contributed to diminiſh it. Every tender epithet beſtowed on her ſiſter brought a pang to her heart and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though cured

cured, ever plants others where it has been, ſo her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealouſy and envy behind. I ſtrove a thouſand ways to leſſen her care, and even forgot my own pain in a concern for hers, collecting ſuch amuſing paſſages of hiſtory, as a ſtrong memory and ſome reading could ſuggeſt. "Our happineſs, my dear," I would ſay, "is in the power of one who can "bring it a bout athouſand unforeſeen ways that "mock our foreſight. If example be neceſſary to "prove this, I'll give you a ſtory, my child, told "us by a grave, though ſometimes a romancing "hiſtorian.

"Matilda was married very young to a Neapoli-"tan nobleman of the firſt quality, and found her-"ſelf a widow and a mother at the age of fifteen. "As ſhe ſtood one day careſſing her infant ſon in "the open window of an apartment, which hung "over the river Volturna, the child, with a ſudden "ſpring, leaped from her arms into the flood below, "and diſappeared in a moment. The mother, "ſtruck with inſtant ſurprize, and making an ef-"fort to ſave him, plunged in after: but, far from "being able to aſſiſt the infant, ſhe herſelf, with "great difficulty, eſcaped the oppoſite ſhore, juſt "when ſome French ſoldiers were plundering the "country, on that ſide who immediately made her "their priſoner.

"As the war was then carried on between the "French and Italians with the utmoſt inhumanity, "they were going at once to perpetrate thoſe two "extremes, ſuggeſted by appetite and cruelty.

"This

"This baſe reſolution, however, was oppoſed by a "young officer, who, though their retreat required "the utmoſt expedition, placed her behind him, "and brought her in ſafety to his native city. "Her beauty at firſt caught his eye, her merit ſoon "after his heart. They were married; he roſe to "the higheſt poſts; they lived long together, and "were happy. But the felicity of a ſoldier can "never be called permanent: after an interval of "ſeveral years, the troops which he commanded "having met with a repulſe, he was obliged to "take ſhelter in the city where he had lived with his "wife. Here they ſuffered a ſiege, and the city "at length was taken. Few hiſtories can produce "more various inſtances of cruelty than thoſe "which the French and Italians at that time ex-"erciſed upon each other. It was reſolved by the "victors, upon this occaſion, to put all the French "priſoners to death, but particularly the huſband "of the unfortunate Matilda, as he was principally "inſtrumental in protracting the ſiege. Their de-"terminations were, in general, executed almoſt a-"ſoon as reſolved upon. The captive ſoldier was "led forth, and the executioner, with his ſword "ſtood ready, while the ſpectators in gloomy ſilence "awaited the fatal blow, which was only ſuſpended "till the general, who preſided as judge, ſhould "give the ſignal. It was in this interval of anguiſh "and expectation that Matilda came to take her "laſt farewell of her huſband and deliverer, "deploring her wretched ſituation, and the "cruelty of fate, that had ſaved her from periſh-

"in

ing by a premature death in the river Volturna, to be the ſpectator of ſtill greater calamities. The general, who was a young man, was ſtruck with ſurprize at her beauty, and pity at her diſtreſs; but with ſtill ſtronger emotions, when he heard her mention her former dangers. He was her ſon, the infant for whom ſhe had encountered ſo much danger. He acknowledged her at once his mother, and fell at her feet. The reſt may be eaſily ſuppoſed; the captive was ſet free, and all the happineſs that love, friendſhip, and duty, could confer on each, were united."

In this manner I would attempt to amuſe my aughter; but ſhe liſtened with divided attention; r her own misfortunes engroſſed all the pity ſhe nce had for thoſe of another, and nothing gave her ſe. In company ſhe dreaded contempt; and in litude ſhe only found anxiety. Such was the cour of her wretchedneſs, when we received certain formation that Mr. Thornhill was going to be arried to Miſs Wilmot, for whom I always ſuſcted he had a real paſſion, though he took every pportunity, before me, to expreſs his contempt oth of her perſon and fortune. This news only rved to increaſe poor Olivia's affliction; ſuch a grant breach of fidelity was more than her couge could ſupport. I was reſolved, however, to t more certain information, and to defeat, if poſble, the completion of his deſigns, by ſending my n to Mr. Wilmot's, with inſtructions to know the uth of the report, and to deliver Miſs Wilmot a letter,

letter, intimating Mr. Thornhill's conduct in my family. My ſon, went in purſuance of my directions, and in three days returned, aſſuring us of the truth of the accounts, but that he had found it impoſſible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr. Thornhill and Miſs Wilmot were viſiting round the country. They were to be married, he ſaid in a few days, having appeared together at church, the Sunday before he was there, in great ſplendour; the bride attended by ſix young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they uſually rode out together in the grandeſt equipage that had been ſeen in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he ſaid, were there; particularly the Squire's uncle, Sir William Thornhill, who bore ſo good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feaſting were going forward; that all the country praiſed the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine perſon, and that they were immenſely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr. Thornhill one of the moſt happy men in the world.

"Why, let him, if he can," returned I: "but "my ſon, obſerve this bed of ſtraw, and unſheltering roof; thoſe mouldering walls, and humid "floor; my wretched body, thus diſabled by fire, "and my children weeping round me for bread. "you have come home, my child, to all this: yet "here, even here, you ſee a man that would not "for a thouſand worlds exchange ſituations. One

"childre

" children, if you could but learn to commune with " your own hearts, and know what noble company " you can make them, you would little regard the " elegance and ſplendor of the worthleſs. Almoſt " all men have been taught to call life a paſſage, and " themſelves the travellers. The ſimilitude ſtill may " be improved, when we obſerve, that the good are " joyful and ſerene, like travellers that are going " towards home; the wicked but by intervals hap- " py, like travellers that are going into exile."

My compaſſion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new diſaſter, interrupted what I had farther to obſerve. I bade her mother ſupport her, and after a ſhort time, ſhe recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and, I imagined, had gained a new degree of reſolution: but appearances deceived me, for her tranquillity was the languor of over-wrought reſentment. A ſupply of proviſions, charitably ſent us by my kind pariſhioners, ſeemed to diffuſe new cheerfulneſs among the reſt of the family; nor was I diſpleaſed at ſeeing them, once more, ſprightly and at eaſe. It would have been unjuſt to damp their ſatisfactions, merely to condole with reſolute melancholy, or to burden them with a ſadneſs they did not feel. Thus, once more, the tale went round, and the ſong was demanded, and cheerfulneſs condeſcended to hover round our little habitation.

CHAP. XXIV.

Freſh calamities.

THE next morning, the ſun aroſe with peculiar warmth for the ſeaſon; ſo that we agreed to breakfaſt together on the honey-ſuckle bank: where, while we ſat, my youngeſt daughter, at my requeſt, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia firſt met her ſeducer, and every object ſerved to recal her ſadneſs. But that melancholy, which is excited by objects of pleaſure, or inſpired by ſounds of harmony, ſoothes the heart inſtead of corroding it. Her mother too, upon this occaſion, felt a pleaſing diſtreſs, and wept and loved her daughter as before. "Do, my pretty "Olivia," cried ſhe, "let us have that little melan-"choly air your pappa was ſo fond of; your ſiſter "Sophy has already obliged us. Do, child, it will "pleaſe your old father." She complied in a manner ſo exquiſitely pathetic, as moved me:

"When lovely woman ſtoops to folly,
"And finds too late that men betray,
"What charm can ſoothe her melancholy,
"What art can waſh her guilt away?

"The only art her guilt to cover,
"To hide her ſhame from ev'ry eye,
"To give repentance to her lover,
"And wring his boſom—is to die."

As

As ſhe was concluding the laſt ſtanza, to which an interruption to her voice, from ſorrow, gave peculiar ſoftneſs, the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at a diſtance alarmed us all, but particularly increaſed the uneaſineſs of my eldeſt daughter, who, deſirous of ſhunning her betrayer, returned to the houſe with her ſiſter. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and, making up to the place where I was ſtill ſitting, enquired after my health, with his uſual air of familiarity. "Sir," replied I, "your preſent aſſurance only ſerves to aggravate the baſeneſs of your character; and there was a time when I would have chaſtiſed your inſolence, for preſuming thus to appear before me. But now you are ſafe; for age has cooled my paſſions, and my calling reſtrains them."

"I vow, my dear Sir," returned he, "I am amazed at all this; nor can I underſtand what it means! I hope you don't think your daughter's late excurſion with me had any thing criminal in it?"

"Go," cried I, "thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful wretch, and every way a liar; but your meanneſs ſecures you from my anger!——Yet, Sir, I am deſcended from a family that would not have borne this! And ſo, thou vile thing, to gratify a momentary paſſion, thou haſt made one poor creature wretched for life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honour for their portion,"

"If ſhe, or you," returned he, "are reſolved to be miſerable, I cannot help it. But you may ſtill be happy; and whatever opinion you may

" have formed of me, you ſhall ever find me ready " to contribute to it. We can marry her to another " in a ſhort time, and, what is more, ſhe may keep " her lover beſide; for I proteſt I ſhall ever conti- " nue to have a true regard for her."

I found all my paſſions alarmed at this new degrading propoſal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villainy can at any time get within the ſoul, and ſting it into rage.—— " Avoid my ſight, thou reptile," cried I, nor con- " tinue to inſult me with thy preſence. Were my " brave ſon at home, he would not ſuffer this: but " I am old, and diſabled, and every way undone."

" I find," cried he, " you are bent upon oblig- " ing me to talk in a harſher manner than I intend- " ed. But as I have ſhown you what may be " hoped from my friendſhip, it may not be impro- " per to repreſent what may be the conſequences " of my reſentment. My attorney, to whom your " late bond has been transferred, threatens hard; " nor do I know how to prevent the courſe of juſ- " tice, except by paying the money myſelf, which, " as I have been at ſome expence lately, previous " to my intended marriage, is not ſo eaſy to be " done: and then my ſteward talks of driving for " the rent: it is certain he knows his duty; for I " never trouble myſelf with affairs of that nature. " Yet ſtill I could wiſh to ſerve you, and even " to have you and your daughter preſent at my " marriage, which is ſhortly to be ſolemnized with " Miſs Wilmot; it is even the requeſt of my charm-

" ing

" ing Arabella herſelf, whom I hope you will not
" refuſe."

" Mr. Thornhill," replied I, " hear me once for
" all: As to your marriage with any but my daugh-
" ter, that I never will conſent to; and though
" your friendſhip could raiſe me to a throne, or your
" reſentment ſink me to the grave, yet would I deſ-
" piſe both. Thou haſt once wofully, irreparably
" deceived me. I repoſed my heart upon thine ho-
" nour, and have found its baſeneſs. Never more,
" therefore, expect friendſhip from me. Go, and
" poſſeſs what fortune has given thee, beauty, riches,
" health, and pleaſure. Go, and leave me to want,
" infamy, diſeaſe, and ſorrow. Yet, humbled as I
" am, ſhall my heart ſtill vindicate its dignity; and
" though thou haſt my forgiveneſs, thou ſhalt ever
" have my contempt."

" If ſo," returned he, " depend upon it you
" ſhall feel the effects of this inſolence: and we ſhall
" ſhortly ſee which is the fitteſt object of ſcorn, you
" or me."——Upon which he departed abruptly.

My wife and ſon, who were preſent at this inter-
view, ſeemed terrified with the apprehenſion. My
daughters alſo, finding that he was gone, came out
to be informed of the reſult of our conference,
which, when known, alarmed them not leſs than
the reſt. But, as to myſelf, I diſregarded the utmoſt
ſtretch of his malevolence: he had already ſtruck the
blow, and now I ſtood prepared to repel every new
effort. Like one of thoſe inſtruments uſed in the
art of war, which, however thrown, ſtill preſents a
point to receive the enemy.

We ſoon, however, found, that he had not threatened in vain; for the very next morning his ſteward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The conſequence of my incapacity, was his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraiſed and ſold the next day for leſs than half their value. My wife and children now therefore intreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain deſtruction. They even begged of me to admit his viſits once more, and uſed all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure; the terrors of a priſon, in ſo rigorous a ſeaſon as the preſent, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

"Why, my treaſures," cried I, "why will you "thus attempt to perſuade me to the thing that is "not right! My duty has taught me to forgive him; "but my conſcience will not permit me to approve. "Would you have me applaud to the world what "my heart muſt internally condemn? Would you "have me tamely ſit down and flatter our infamous "betrayer; and, to avoid a priſon, continually ſuf-"fer the more galling bonds of mental confinement? "No, never. If we are to be taken from this abode, "only let us hold to the right, and, wherever we "are thrown, we can ſtill retire to a charming apart-"ment, when we can look round our own hearts "with intrepidity and with pleaſure!"

In this manner we ſpent that evening. Early the next morning, as the ſnow had fallen in great abundance

dance in the night, my ſon was employed in clearing it away, and opening a paſſage before the door. He had not been thus engaged long, when he came running in, with looks pale, to tell us that two ſtrangers, whom he knew to be officers of juſtice, were making towards the houſe.

Juſt as he ſpoke they came in, and, approaching the bed where I lay, after previouſly informing me of their employment and buſineſs, made me their priſoner; bidding me prepare to go with them to the county goal, which was eleven miles off.

"My friends," ſaid I, "this is ſevere weather in "which you have come to take me to a priſon; and "it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one "of my arms has lately been burnt in a terrible "manner, and it has thrown me into a ſlight fever, "and I want clothes to cover me, and I am now "too weak and old to walk far in ſuch deep ſnow: "but, if it muſt be ſo,"——

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I intreated them to be expeditious, and deſired my ſon to aſſiſt his eldeſt ſiſter, who, from a conſciouſneſs that ſhe was the cauſe of all our calamities, was fallen, and had loſt anguiſh in inſenſibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, claſped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her boſom in ſilence, dreading to look round at the ſtrangers. In the mean time my youngeſt daughter prepared for our departure; and as ſhe received

ſeveral hints to uſe diſpatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

CHAP. XXV.

No ſituation, however wretched it ſeems, but has ſome ſort of comfort attending it.

WE ſet forward from this peaceable neighbourhood, and walked on ſlowly. My eldeſt daughter being enfeebled by a ſlow fever which had begun for ſome days to undermine her conſtitution, one of the officers, who had an horſe, kindly took her behind him; for even theſe men cannot entirely diveſt themſelves of humanity. My ſon led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other; while I leaned upon my youngeſt girl, whoſe tears fell, not for her own, but my diſtreſſes.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we ſaw a crowd running and ſhouting behind us, conſiſting of about fifty of my pooreſt pariſhioners. Theſe, with dreadful imprecations, ſoon ſeized upon the two officers of juſtice, and ſwearing they would never ſee their miniſter go to goal, while they had a drop of blood to ſhed in his defence, were going to uſe them with great ſeverity. The conſequence might have been fatal, had I not immediately interpoſed, and, with ſome difficulty, reſcued the officers from the hands of the multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery

delivery now as certain, appeared tranſported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were ſoon undeceived, upon hearing me addreſs the poor deluded people, who came, as they imagined, to do me ſervice.

"What! my friends," cried I, "and is this the "way you love me? Is this the manner you obey "the inſtructions I have given you from the pulpit, "thus to fly in the face of juſtice, and bring down "ruin on yourſelves and me? Which is your ring-"leader? Show me the man that has thus ſeduced "you: as ſure as he lives, he ſhall feel my reſent-"ment. Alas! my dear deluded flock, return back "to the duty you owe to God, to your country, "and to me. I ſhall yet perhaps one day ſee you "in greater felicity here, and contribute to make "your lives more happy. But let it at leaſt be my "comfort when I pen my fold for immortality, "that not one here ſhall be wanting."

They now ſeemed all repentance, and melting into tears, came one after the other to bid me fare-well. I ſhook each tenderly by the hand, and, leaving them my bleſſing, proceeded forward, with-out meeting any farther interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village; for it conſiſted but of a few mean houſes, having loſt all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient ſuperiority but the goal.

Upon entering, we put up at an inn, where we had ſuch refreſhments as could moſt readily be pro-cured, and I ſupped with my family with my uſual cheerfulneſs. After ſeeing them properly accom-

modated for that night, I next attended the ſheriff's officers to the priſon, which had formerly been built for the purpoſes of war, and conſiſted of one large apartment, ſtrongly grated, and paved with ſtone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four and twenty. Beſides this, every priſoner had a ſeparate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected upon my entrance, to find nothing but lamentations, and various ſounds of miſery; but it was very different. The priſoners ſeemed all employed in one common deſign, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was apprized of the uſual perquiſite required upon theſe occaſions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being exhauſted. This was immediately ſent away for liquor; and the whole priſon was ſoon filled with riot, laughter, and profaneneſs.

"How!" cried I to myſelf, "ſhall men ſo very "wicked be chearful, and ſhall I be melancholy? "I feel only the ſame confinement with them, and "I think I have more reaſon to be happy."

With ſuch reflections I laboured to become chearful: but chearfulneſs was never yet produced by effort which is itſelf painful. As I was ſitting therefore in a corner of the goal, in a penſive poſture, one of my fellow-priſoners came up, and, ſitting by me, entered into converſation. It was my conſtant rule in life never to avoid the converſation of any man who ſeemed to deſire it; for, if good, I might profit by his inſtruction; if bad, he might be aſſiſted by

by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of ſtrong unlettered ſenſe, but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called, or, more properly ſpeaking, of human nature on the wrong ſide. He aſked me if I had taken care to provide myſelf with a bed, which was a circumſtance I had never once attended to.

"That's unfortunate," cried he, "as you are "allowed here nothing but ſtraw, and your apart-"ment is very large and cold. However, you ſeem "to be ſomething of a gentleman, and as I have "been one myſelf in my time, part of my bed-"clothes are heartily at your ſervice."

I thanked him, profeſſing my ſurpriſe at finding ſuch humanity in a goal, in misfortunes; adding, to let him ſee that I was a ſcholar, that "the ſage an-"cient ſeemed to underſtand the value of company "in affliction, when he ſaid, *Ton koſman aire, ei dos "ton etairon*; and in fact," continued I, "what is "the world if it affords only ſolitude?"

"You talk of the world, Sir," replied my fel-low-priſoner; "the world is in its dotage, and yet "the coſmogony or creation of the world, has puz-"zled philoſophers of every age. What a medley "of opinions have they not broached upon the "creation of the world! Sanconiathon, Manetho, "Beroſus, and Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempt-"ed it in vain. The latter has theſe words: *Anar-"chon ara kai atelutaion to pan*, which implies" "——" I aſk pardon, Sir," cried I, "for in-"terrupting ſo much learning; but I think I have "heard all this before. Have I not had the plea-

"ſure

"ſure of once ſeeing you at Welbridge fair? and is "not your name Ephraim Jenkinſon? At this demand he only ſighed. "I ſuppoſe you muſt re-"collect," reſumed I, "one Doctor Primroſe, "from whom you bought a horſe."

He now at once recollected me; for the gloominess of the place, and the approaching night, had prevented his diſtinguiſhing my features before.—— "Yes, Sir," returned Mr. Jenkinſon, "I remem-"ber you perfectly well: I bought a horſe, but "forgot to pay for him. Your neighbour Flamboro-"rough is the only proſecutor I am any way afraid "of at the next aſſizes: for he intends to ſwear po-"ſitively againſt me as a coiner. I am heartily ſor-"ry, Sir, I ever deceived you, or indeed any "man; for you ſee," continued he, ſhowing his ſhackles, "what my tricks have brought me to."

"Well, Sir," replied I, "your kindneſs in of-"fering me aſſiſtance when you could expect no "return, ſhall be repaid with my endeavours to "ſoften or totally ſuppreſs Mr. Flamborough's evi-"dence; and I will ſend my ſon to him for that "purpoſe the firſt opportunity; nor do I in the "leaſt doubt but he will comply with my requeſt; "and as to my own evidence, you need be under "no uneaſineſs about that."

"Well, Sir," cried he, "all the return I can "make ſhall be yours. You ſhall have more than "half my bed-clothes to-night; and I'll take care to "ſtand your friend in the priſon, where, I think, I "have ſome influence."

I thanked

I thanked him, and could not avoid being ſurpriſed at the preſent youthful change in his aſpect; for, at the time I had ſeen him before, he appeared at leaſt ſixty.—"Sir," anſwered he, "you are "little acquainted with the world; I had at that "time falſe hair, and have learned the art of coun-"terfeiting every age, from ſeventeen to ſeventy. "Ah, Sir, had I but beſtowed half the pains in "learning a trade that I have in learning to be a "ſcoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this "day. But, rogue as I am, ſtill I may be your "friend, and that perhaps when you leaſt expect "it."

We were now prevented from farther converſation by the arrival of the goaler's ſervants, who came to call over the priſoners names, and lock up for the night. A fellow alſo, with a bundle of ſtraw for my bed, attended, who led me along a dark narrow paſſage, into a room paved like the common priſon; and in one corner of this I ſpread my bed, and the clothes given me by my fellow-priſoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good-night. After my uſual meditations, and having praiſed my Heavenly Corrector, I laid myſelf down, and ſlept with the utmoſt tranquillity till morning.

CHAP. XXVI.

A reformation in the goal. To make laws complete, they ſhould reward as well as puniſh.

THE next morning early, I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bedſide. The gloomy ſtrength of every thing about us, it ſeems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their ſorrow, aſſuring them, I had never ſlept with greater tranquillity; and next inquired after my eldeſt daughter, who was not among them. They informed me, that yeſterday's uneaſineſs and fatigue had increaſed her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to ſend my ſon to procure a room or two to lodge the family in, as near the priſon as conveniently could be found. He obeyed; but could only find one apartment, which was hired, at a ſmall expence, for his mother and ſiſters, the goaler with humanity conſenting to let him and his two little brothers lie in the priſon with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in the corner of the room, which I thought anſwered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previouſly to know whether my little children choſe to lye in a place which ſeemed to fright them upon entrance.

"Well," cried I, "my good boys, how do you "like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lye in "this room, dark as it appears?"

"No,

"No, Pappa," ſays Dick, "I am not afraid to "lye any where, where you are."

"And I," ſays Bill, who was yet but four years old, "love every place beſt that my Pappa "is in."

After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her declining ſiſter's health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me: "And as for you, my ſon," continued I, "it "is by the labour of your hands we muſt all hope "to be ſupported. Your wages, as a day-labourer, "will be fully ſufficient, with proper frugality, to "maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art "now ſixteen years old, and haſt ſtrength; and it "was given thee, my ſon, for very uſeful purpoſes; "for it muſt ſave from famine your helpleſs pa- "rents and family. Prepare, then, this evening to "look out work againſt to-morrow; bring home "every night what money you earn, for our ſup- "port."

Having thus inſtructed him, and ſettled the reſt, I walked down to the common priſon, where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there when the execrations, lewdneſs, and brutality that invaded me on every ſide, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I ſat for ſome time pondering upon the ſtrange infatuation of wretches, who, finding all mankind in open arms againſt them, were labouring to make themſelves a future and a tremendous enemy.

Their

Their inſenſibility excited my higheſt compaſſion, and blotted my own uneaſineſs from my mind. It even appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them. I reſolved, therefore, once more to return, and in ſpite of their contempt, to give them my advice, and conquer them by perſeverance. Going, therefore, among them again, I informed Mr. Jenkinſon of my deſign; at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the reſt. The propoſal was received with the greateſt good humour, as it promiſed to afford a new fund of entertainment to perſons who had now no other reſource for mirth, but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the ſervice with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occaſion. Loud whiſpers, groans of contrition burleſqu'd, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural ſolemnity to read on, ſenſible, that what I did might amend ſome, but could itſelf receive no contamination from any.

After reading, I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at firſt to amuſe them, than to reprove. I previouſly obſerved, that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow-priſoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was ſorry, I ſaid, to hear them ſo very profane; becauſe they got nothing by it, but might loſe a great deal: "For be aſſured, "my friends," cried I, "for you are my friends,

"however

" however the world may diſclaim the friendſhip, " though you ſwore twelve thouſand oaths in a " day, it would not put one penny in your purſe. " Then what ſignifies calling every moment upon " the devil, and courting his friendſhip, ſince you " find how ſcurvily he uſes you? He has given you " nothing here, you find, but a mouthful of oaths " and an empty belly; and, by the beſt accounts I " have of him, he will give you nothing that's good " hereafter.

" If uſed ill in our dealings with one man, we " naturally go elſewhere. Were it not worth your " while, then, juſt to try how you may like the " uſage of another maſter, who gives you fair pro- " miſes at leaſt, to come to him? Surely, my " friends, of all ſtupidity in the world, his muſt be " greateſt, who, after robbing an houſe, runs to the " thief-takers for protection. And yet, how are " you more wiſe? You are all ſeeking comfort from " one that has already betrayed you, applying to a " more malicious being than any thief-taker of them " all; for they only decoy, and then hang you; " but he decoys and hangs, and, what is worſt of " all, will not let you looſe when the hangman has " done."

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, ſome of whom came and ſhook me by the hand, ſwearing that I was a very honeſt fellow, and that they deſired my farther acquaintance. I therefore promiſed to repeat my lecture next day, and actually conceived ſome hopes of making a reformation here; for it had ever been

my

my opinion, that no man was paſt the hour of amendment, every heart lying open to the ſhafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus ſatisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal, while Mr. Jenkinſon begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleaſure, as he was kind enough to expreſs it, of my converſation. He had not yet ſeen my family; for, as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow paſſage already deſcribed, by this means they avoided the common priſon. Jenkinſon, at the firſt interview, therefore, ſeemed not a little ſtruck with the beauty of my youngeſt daughter, which her penſive air contributed to heighten; and my little ones did not paſs unnoticed.

"Alas! Doctor," cried he, "theſe children are "too handſome and too good for ſuch a place as "this!"

"Why, Mr. Jenkinſon," replied I, "thank "Heaven, my children are pretty tolerable in "morals; and if they be good, it matters little for "the reſt."

"I fancy, Sir," returned my fellow-priſoner, "that it muſt give you great comfort to have "this little family about you."

"A comfort, Mr. Jenkinſon," replied I; "yes, "it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without them for all the world; for they can make a "dungeon ſeem a palace. There is but one way in "this life of wounding my happineſs, and that is, "by injuring them."

"I am

"I am afraid then, Sir," cried he, "that I am "in ſome meaſure culpable; for I think I ſee here "(looking at my ſon Moſes) one that I have injur-"ed, and by whom I wiſh to be forgiven."

My ſon immediately recollected his voice and features, though he had before ſeen him in diſguiſe, and taking him by the hand, with a ſmile, forgave him. "Yet," continued he, "I can't help wondering at "what you could ſee in my face, to think me a pro-"per mark for deception."

"My dear Sir," continued the other, "it was not "your face, but your white ſtockings, and the black "ribband in your hair, that allured me. But, no "diſparagement to your parts; I have deceived "wiſer men than you in my time; and yet, with "all my tricks, the blockheads have been too ma-"ny for me at laſt."

"I ſuppoſe," cried my ſon, "that the narrative "of ſuch a life as yours muſt be extremely inſtruct-"ing and amuſing."

"Not much of either," returned Mr. Jenkinſon. "Thoſe relations which deſcribe the tricks and "vices only of mankind, by increaſing our ſuſpi-"cions in life, retard our ſucceſs. The traveller "that diſtruſts every perſon he meets, and turns "back upon the appearance of every man that "looks like a robber, ſeldom arrives in time at his "journey's end."

"Indeed, I think, from my own experience, that "the knowing one is the ſilliеſt fellow under the "ſun. I was thought cunning from my very child-"hood: when but ſeven years old, the ladies would

"ſay

" ſay that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen,
" knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved th
" ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honeſ
" yet every one thought me ſo cunning, that not on
" would truſt me. Thus I was at laſt obliged to tur
" ſharper in my own defence, and have lived eve
" ſince, my head throbbing with ſchemes to de
" ceive, and my heart palpitating with fears of de
" tection.

" I uſed often to laugh at your honeſt, ſimpl
" neighbour Flamborough; and, one way or ano
" ther, generally cheated him once a-year: yet ſti
" the honeſt man went forward without ſuſpicion
" and grew rich; while I ſtill continued trickſy an
" cunning, and was poor, without the conſolatio
" of being honeſt.

" However," continued he, " let me know you
" caſe, and what has brought you here; perhaps
" though I have not ſkill to avoid a goal myſelf,
" may extricate my friends."

In compliance with his curioſity, I informed hi
of the whole train of accidents and follies that ha
plunged me into my preſent troubles, and my utte
inability to get free.

After hearing my ſtory, and pauſing ſome mi
nutes, he ſlapt his forehead, as if he had hit upo
ſomething material, and took his leave, ſaying, h
ſhould try what could be done.

CHA

CHAP. XXVII.

The ſame ſubject continued.

THE next morning I communicated to my wife and children the ſcheme I had planned of reforming the priſoners, which they received with univerſal diſapprobation, alledging the impoſſibility and impropriety of it; adding, that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably diſgrace my calling.

"Excuſe me," returned I, "theſe people, however fallen, are ſtill men, and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counſel rejected, returns to enrich the giver's boſom; and though the inſtruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will aſſuredly mend myſelf. If theſe wretches, my children, were princes, there would be thouſands ready to offer their miniſtry; but, in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that ſeated upon a throne. Yes, my treaſures, if I can mend them I will; perhaps they will not all deſpiſe me. Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulph, and that will be great gain; for, is there upon earth a gem ſo precious as the human ſoul?"

Thus ſaying, I left them, and deſcended to the common priſon, where I found the priſoners very merry, expecting my arrival; and each prepared with ſome goal-trick to play upon the Doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry,

as

as if by accident, and then aſked my pardon. A ſecond, who ſtood at ſome diſtance, had a knack of ſpitting through his teeth, which fell in ſhowers upon my book. A third would cry, *Amen*, in ſuch an affected tone, as gave the reſt great delight. A fourth had ſlily picked my pocket of my ſpectacles. But there was one whoſe trick gave more univerſal pleaſure than all the reſt; for obſerving the manner in which I had diſpoſed my books on the table before me, he very dextrouſly diſplaced one of them, and put an obſcene jeſt-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this miſchievous group of little beings could do; but went on, perfectly ſenſible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the firſt or ſecond time, while, what was ſerious, would be permanent. My deſign ſucceeded; and, in leſs than ſix days, ſome were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perſeverance and addreſs, at thus giving ſenſibility to wretches diveſted of every moral feeling: and now began to think of doing them temporal ſervices alſo, by rendering their ſituation ſomewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and exceſs, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco ſtoppers. From this laſt mode of idle induſtry, I took the hint of ſetting ſuch as choſe to work at cutting pegs for tobacconiſts and ſhoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general ſubſcription, and, when manufactured, ſold by my appointment; ſo that each earned

earned ſomething every day; a trifle indeed, but ſufficient to maintain him.

I did not ſtop here, but inſtituted fines for the puniſhment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar induſtry. Thus, in leſs than a fortnight, I had formed them into ſomething ſocial and humane, and had the pleaſure of regarding myſelf as a legiſlator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendſhip and obedience.

And it were highly to be wiſhed, that legiſlative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than ſeverity; that it would ſeem convinced, that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making puniſhments familiar, but formidable. Then, inſtead of our preſent priſons, which find, or make men guilty, which incloſe wretches for the commiſſion of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thouſands; we ſhould ſee, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and ſolitude, where the accuſed might be attended by ſuch as could give them repentance, if guilty, or new motives to virtue, if innocent. And this, but not the increaſing of puniſhments, is the way to mend a ſtate: nor can I avoid even queſtioning the validity of that right which ſocial combinations have aſſumed, of capitally puniſhing offences of a ſlight nature. In caſes of murder, their right is obvious; as it is the duty of us all, from the law of ſelf-defence, to cut off that man who has ſhewn a diſregard for the life of another. Againſt ſuch all nature riſes in arms; but it is not ſo againſt him who ſteals my property. Natural law gives me

me no right to take away his life; as, by that, the horſe he ſteals is as much his property as mine. If then I have any right, it muſt be from a compact between us, that he who deprives the other of his horſe ſhall die. But this is a falſe compact; becauſe no man has a right to barter his life, no more than to take it away, as it is not his own; and beſide, the compact is inadequate, and would be ſet aſide even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a very trifling convenience, ſince it is far better that two men ſhould live, than that one man ſhould ride. But a compact that is falſe between two men, is equally ſo between an hundred, or an hundred thouſand: for as ten millions of circles can never make a ſquare, ſo the united voice of myriads cannot lend the ſmalleſt foundation to falſehood. It is thus that Reaſon ſpeaks, and untutored Nature ſays the ſame thing. Savages that are directed by natural law alone are very tender of the lives of each other; and ſeldom ſhed blood, but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon anceſtors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing governments, that have the print of nature ſtill ſtrong upon them, ſcarce any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, ſeems to acquire the moroſeneſs of age; and, as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increaſed, as if the more enormous our wealth,

the

the more extenſive our fears, all our poſſeſſions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to ſcare every invader.

I cannot tell whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiouſneſs of our people, that this country ſhould ſhow more convicts in a year, than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When, by indiſcriminate penal laws, a nation beholds the ſame puniſhment affixed to diſſimilar degrees of guilt; from perceiving no diſtinction in the penalty, the people are led to loſe all ſenſe of diſtinction in the crime; and this diſtinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus, the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for freſh reſtraints.

t were to be wiſhed then, that power, inſtead of contriving new laws to puniſh vice, inſtead of drawing hard the cords of ſociety till a convulſion come to burſt them, inſtead of cutting away wretches as uſeleſs before we have tried their utility, inſtead of converting correction into vengeance; it were to be wiſhed that we tried the reſtrictive arts of government, and made law the protector, but not the tyrant of the people. We ſhould then find, that creatures, whoſe ſouls are held as droſs, only wanted the hand of a refiner; we ſhould then find, that wretches, now ſtuck up for long tortures, leſt luxury ſhould feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, ſerve to ſinew the ſtate in times of danger; that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are ſo too; that few minds are ſo baſe as that perſeverance

cannot amend; that a man may ſee his laſt crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will ſerve to cement our ſecurity.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Happineſs and miſery rather the reſult of prudence than of virtue, in this life; temporal evils, or felicities, being regarded by Heaven as things merely in themſelves trifling, and unworthy its care in the diſtribution.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not, ſince my arrival, been viſited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to ſee her. Having communicated my wiſhes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment, leaning on her ſiſter's arm. The change which I ſaw in her countenance ſtruck me. The numberleſs graces that once reſided there were now fled; and the hand of death ſeemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were ſunk, her forehead was tenſe, and a fatal paleneſs ſat upon her cheek.

"I am glad to ſee thee, my dear," cried I; "but "why this dejection; Livy? I hope, my love, "you have too great a regard for me, to permit diſ- "appointment thus to determine a life which I "prize as my own. Be cheerful, child; and we yet "may ſee happier days."

"You

"You have ever, Sir," replied ſhe, "been kind "to me; and it adds to my pain, that I ſhall never "have an opportunity of ſharing that happineſs you "promiſe. Happineſs, I fear, is no longer reſerved "for me here; and I long to be rid of a place "where I have only found diſtreſs. Indeed, Sir, I "wiſh you would make a proper ſubmiſſion to Mr. "Thornhill; it may, in ſome meaſure, induce him "to pity you, and it will give me relief in dying."

"Never, child," replied I, "never will I be "brought to acknowledge my daughter a proſtitute; "for, though the world may look upon your of-"fence with ſcorn, let it be mine to regard it as a "mark of credulity, not of guilt. My dear, I am "no way miſerable in this place, however diſmal it "may ſeem; and be aſſured, that, while you con-"tinue to bleſs me by living, he ſhall never have "my conſent to make you more wretched by mar-"rying another."

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-priſoner, who was by at this interview, ſenſibly enough expoſtulated upon my obſtinacy, in refuſing a ſubmiſſion which promiſed to give me freedom. He obſerved, that the reſt of my family was not to be ſacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and ſhe the only one who had offended me. "Beſides," added he, "I don't know if it be juſt thus to ob-"ſtruct the union of man and wife, which you do "at preſent, by refuſing to conſent to a match which "you cannot hinder, but may render unhappy."

"Sir," replied I, you are unacquainted with the "man that oppreſſes us. I am very ſenſible, that

" no ſubmiſſion I can make, could procure me li-
" berty, even for an hour. I am told, that, even
" in this very room, a debtor of his, no later than
" laſt year, died for want. But, though my ſub-
" miſſion and approbation could transfer me from
" hence to the moſt beautiful apartment he is poſ-
" ſeſſed of; yet I would grant neither, as ſomething
" whiſpers me, that it would be giving ſanction to
" adultery. While my daughter lives, no other
" marriage of his ſhall ever be legal in my eye.
" Were ſhe removed, indeed, I ſhould be the baſeſt
" of men, from any reſentment of my own, to at-
" tempt putting aſunder thoſe who wiſh for a uni-
" on. No, villain as he is, I ſhould then wiſh him
" married, to prevent the conſequences of his fu-
" ture debaucheries. But now, ſhould I not be the
" moſt cruel of all fathers, to ſign an inſtrument
" which muſt ſend my child to the grave, merely to
" avoid a priſon myſelf; and thus, to eſcape one
" pang, break my child's heart with a thouſand!"

He acquieſced in the juſtice of this anſwer; but could not avoid obſerving, that he feared my daughter's life was already too much waſted to keep me long a priſoner. " However," continued he, " though you refuſe to ſubmit to the nephew, I hope " you have no objection to laying your caſe before " the uncle, who has the firſt character in the king-" dom for every thing that is juſt and good. I would " adviſe you to ſend him a letter by the poſt, inti-" mating all his nephew's ill uſage; and my life for " it, that in three days you ſhall have an anſwer." I thanked him for the hint, and inſtantly ſet about complying

complying; but I wanted paper; and, unluckily, all our money had been laid out that morning in provifions; however, he ſupplied me.

For the three enſuihg days, I was in a ſtate of anxiety; but, in the mean time, was frequently ſolicited by my wife to ſubmit to any conditions rather than remain here; and, every hour, received repeated accounts of the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived; but I received no anſwer to my letter: the complaints of a ſtranger againſt a favourite nephew were no way likely to ſucceed; ſo that theſe hopes were vaniſhed, like all my former. My mind, however, ſtill ſupported itſelf, though confinement and bad air began to make a viſible alteration in my health; and my arm, that had ſuffered in the fire, grew worſe. My children, however, ſat by me, and, while I was ſtretched on my ſtraw, read to me by turns, or liſtened and wept at my inſtructions. But my daughter's health declined faſter than mine: every meſſage from her contributed to increaſe my apprehenſions and pain. The fifth morning after I had written the letter, which was ſent to Sir William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that ſhe was ſpeechleſs. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me; my ſoul was burſting from its priſon to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to ſtrengthen her, to receive her laſt wiſhes, and teach her ſoul the way to heaven! Another account came; ſhe was expiring; and yet I was debarred the ſmall comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-priſoner, ſome time after, came with the laſt account. He bade me be

patient. She was dead! The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They intreated to read to me, and bade me not to cry, for I was now too old to weep. "And is not my sister an angel now, "Pappa?" cried the eldest; "and why then are "you sorry for her? I wish I were an angel out of "this frightful place, if my Pappa were with me." "Yes," added my youngest darling, "Heaven, "where my sister is, is a finer place than this; and "there are none but good people there, and the peo-"ple here are very bad."

Mr. Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle by observing, that, now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any pride or resentment of my own, to the welfare of those who depended on me for support; and that I was now, both by reason and justice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

"Heaven be praised," replied I, "there is no "pride left me now. I should detest my own heart "if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. "On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once "my parishioner, I hope one day to present him up "an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, "Sir, I have no resentment now; and though he "has taken from me what I held dearer than all his "treasures; though he has wrung my heart, for I

"am

" am ſick almoſt to fainting, very ſick, my fellow-
" priſoner, yet that ſhall never inſpire me with ven-
" geance. I am now willing to approve his marri-
" age; and if this ſubmiſſion can do him any plea-
" ſure, let him know, that, if I have done him any
" injury, I am ſorry for it." Mr. Jenkinſon took pen and ink, and wrote down my ſubmiſſion, nearly as I have expreſſed it, to which I ſigned my name. My ſon was employed to carry the letter to Mr. Thornhill, who was then at his ſeat in the country. He went, and in about ſix hours returned with a verbal anſwer. He had ſome difficulty, he ſaid, to get a ſight of his landlord, as the ſervants were inſolent and ſuſpicious; but he accidentally ſaw him as he was going out upon buſineſs, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us, that he ſtepped up in the humbleſt manner, and delivered the letter; which, when Mr. Thornhill had read, he ſaid, That all ſubmiſſion was now too late, and unneceſſary; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deſerved; and as for the reſt, that all future applications ſhould be directed to his attorney, not to him. He obſerved, however, that, as he had a very good opinion of the diſcretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the moſt agreeable interceſſors.

" Well, Sir," ſaid I to my fellow-priſoner, " you
" now diſcover the temper of the man that oppreſſes
" me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but
" let him uſe me as he will, I ſhall ſoon be free, in
" ſpite of all his bolts to reſtrain me. I am now

" drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I " approach it: this expectation cheers my afflictions; " and, though I leave an helpleſs family of orphans " behind me, yet they will not be utterly forſaken; " ſome friend, perhaps, will be found to aſſiſt them, " for the ſake of their poor father; and ſome may " charitably relieve them, for the ſake of their hea- " venly Father."

Juſt as I ſpoke, my wife, whom I had not ſeen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to ſpeak. " Why, my " love," cried I, " why will you thus increaſe my " afflictions by your own? What though no ſub- " miſſions can turn our ſevere maſter, though he " has doomed me to die in this place of wretched- " neſs, and though we have loſt a darling child, " yet ſtill you will find comfort in your other chil- " dren, when I ſhall be no more." " We have " indeed loſt," returned ſhe, " a darling child. My " Sophia, my deareſt, is gone, ſnatched from us, " carried off by ruffians!"

" How, Madam," cried my fellow-priſoner, " Miſs " Sophia carried off by villains! ſure it cannot " be?"

She could only anſwer with a fixed look and a flood of tears. But one of the priſoner's wives, who was preſent, and came in with her, gave us a more diſtinct account: ſhe informed us, that, as my wife, my daughter, and herſelf, were taking a walk together on the great road, a little way out of the village, a poſt-chaiſe and pair drove up to them, and inſtantly ſtopped. Upon which a well dreſſed man,

man, but not Mr. Thornhill, ſtepping out, claſped my daughter round the waiſt, and forcing her in, bid the poſtilion drive on, ſo that they were out of ſight in a moment.

"Now," cried I, "the ſum of my miſeries is "made up; nor is it in the power of any thing on "earth to give me another pang. What! not one "left! not to leave me one! the monſter! the child "that was next my heart! ſhe had the beauty of "an angel, and almoſt the wiſdom of an angel. "But ſupport that woman, nor let her fall. Not to "leave me one!"—"Alas! my huſband," cried my wife, "you ſeem to want comfort even more "than I. Our diſtreſſes are great; but I could bear "this, and more, if I ſaw you but eaſy. They "may take away my children, and all the world, if "they leave but you."

My ſon, who was preſent, endeavoured to moderate our grief; he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might ſtill have reaſon to be thankful.—"My child," cried I, "look round the world, and "ſee if there be any happineſs left me now. Is "not every ray of comfort ſhut out? while all our "bright proſpects only lie beyond the grave!"——"My dear father," returned he, "I hope there is "ſtill ſomething that will give you an interval of "ſatisfaction; for I have a letter from my brother "George."——"What of him, child?" interrupted I; "does he know our miſery? I hope my boy "is exempt from any part of what his wretched fa-"mily ſuffers."——"Yes, Sir," returned he, "he "is perfectly gay, chearful, and happy. His let-

"ter brings nothing but good news; he is the "favourite of his colonel, who promiſes to pro-"cure him the very next lieutenancy that becomes "vacant.

"And are you ſure of all this?" cried my wife; "are you ſure that nothing ill has befallen my "boy?"——"Nothing, indeed, Madam," returned my ſon, "you ſhall ſee the letter, which will "give you the higheſt pleaſure; and if any thing "can procure you comfort, I am ſure that will." ——"But are you ſure," ſtill repeated ſhe, "that "the letter is from himſelf, and that he is really ſo "happy!"——"Yes Madam," replied he, "it is "certainly his; and he will one day be the credit "and the ſupport of our family!"——"Then I "thank Providence," cried ſhe, "that my laſt let-"ter miſcarried. Yes, my dear," continued ſhe, turning to me, "I will now confeſs, that, though "the hand of Heaven is ſore upon us in other in-"ſtances, it has been favourable here. By the laſt "letter I wrote my ſon, which was in the bitterneſs "of anger, I deſired him, upon his mother's bleſ-"ſing, and if he had the heart of a man, to ſee "juſtice done his father and ſiſter, and avenge our "cauſe. But, thanks be to Him that directs all "things, it has miſcarried; and I am at reſt." "Woman," cried I, "thou haſt done very ill; and "at another time my reproaches might have been "more ſevere. Oh! what a tremendous gulph haſt "thou eſcaped, that would have buried both thee "and him in endleſs ruin! Providence, indeed, has "here been kinder to us than we to ourſelves. It

"has

" has reſerved that ſon to be the father and pro-
" tector of my children when I ſhall be away.
" How unjuſtly did I complain of being ſtripped of
" every comfort, when ſtill I hear that he is happy,
" and inſenſible of our afflictions; ſtill kept in re-
" ſerve to ſupport his widowed mother, and to pro-
" tect his brothers and ſiſters! But what ſiſters has
" he left? he has no ſiſters now, they are all gone,
" robbed from me, and I am undone."——" Fa-
" ther," interrupted my ſon, " I beg you will give
" me leave to read his letter; I know it will pleaſe
" you." Upon which, with my permiſſion, he read as follows:

" Honoured Sir,

" I have called off my imagination a few mo-
" ments from the pleaſures that ſurround me, to fix
" it upon objects that are ſtill more pleaſing, the
" dear little fire-ſide at home. My fancy draws
" that harmleſs group, as liſtening to every line of
" this with great compoſure. I view thoſe faces
" with delight, which never felt the deforming hand
" of ambition or diſtreſs! But whatever your hap-
" pineſs may be at home, I am ſure it will be ſome
" addition to it, to hear that I am perfectly pleaſ-
" ed with my ſituation, and every way happy
" here.

" Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to
" leave the kingdom; the colonel, who profeſſes
" himſelf my friend, takes me with him to all com-
" panies where he is acquainted; and after my firſt
" viſit, I generally find myſelf received with in-

" creaſed

"creaſed reſpect upon repeating it. I danced laſt "night with Lady G———, and could I forget "you know whom, I might be perhaps ſucceſsful. "But it is my fate ſtill to remember others, while I "am myſelf forgotten, by moſt of my abſent "friends; and in this number, I fear, Sir, that I "muſt conſider you; for I have long expected the "pleaſure of a letter from home, to no purpoſe. "Olivia and Sophia too promiſed to write, but ſeem "to have forgotten me. Tell them they are two "arrant little baggages, and that I am this moment "in a moſt violent paſſion with them; yet ſtill I "know not how, though I want to bluſter a little, "my heart is reſpondent only to ſofter emotions. "Then tell them, Sir, that, after all, I love them "affectionately, and be aſſured of my ever re-"maining"

"Your dutiful ſon,"

"In all our miſeries," cried I, "what thanks "have we not to return, that one at leaſt of our fa-"mily is exempted from what we ſuffer? Heaven be "his guard, and keep my boy thus happy, to be "the ſupporter of his widowed mother, and the "father of theſe two babes, which is all the patri-"mony I can now bequeath him. May he keep "their innocence from the temptations of want, "and be their conductor in the paths of honour!" I had ſcarce ſaid theſe words, when a noiſe like that of a tumult ſeemed to proceed from the priſon be-low; it died away ſoon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the paſſage that led to my apartment.

apartment. The keeper of the priſon entered holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heavieſt irons. I looked with compaſſion on the wretch as he approached me, but with horror, when I found it was my own ſon. "My George! "my George! and do I behold thee thus? Wounded! fettered! Is this thy happineſs? Is this "the manner you return to me? O that this "ſight could break my heart at once, and let me "die!"

"Where, Sir, is your fortitude?" returned my ſon with an intrepid voice. "I muſt ſuffer; my "life is forfeited, and let them take it."

I tried to reſtrain my paſſion for a few minutes in ſilence; but I thought I ſhould have died with the effort.——"O my boy, my heart weeps to behold "thee thus, and I cannot, cannot help it. In the "moment that I thought thee bleſt, and prayed for "thy ſafety, to behold thee thus again! Chained, "wounded. And yet the death of the youthful is "happy. But I am old, a very old man, and have "lived to ſee this day: to ſee my children, all untimely falling about me, while I continue a "wretched ſurvivor in the midſt of ruin! May all "the curſes that ever ſunk a ſoul fall heavy upon "the murderer of my children! May he live like "me to ſee———"

"Hold, Sir," replied my ſon, or I ſhall bluſh "for thee. How, Sir, forgetful of your age, your "holy calling, thus to arrogate the juſtice of Heaven, and fling thoſe curſes upward that muſt ſoon "deſcend to cruſh thy own grey head with deſtruc-

"tion!

"tion! No, Sir, let it be your care now to fit me "for that vile death I muſt ſhortly ſuffer, to arm "me with hope and reſolution, to give me courage "to drink of that bitterneſs which muſt ſhortly be "my portion."

"My child, you muſt not die. I am ſure no of-"fence of thine can deſerve ſo vile a puniſhment: "my George could never be guilty of any crime to "make his anceſtors aſhamed of him."

"Mine, Sir," returned my ſon, "is, I fear, an "unpardonable one. When I received my mother's "letter from home, I immediately came down, de-"termined to puniſh the betrayer of our honour, "and ſent him an order to meet me, which he an-"ſwered, not in perſon, but by diſpatching four "of his domeſtics to ſeize me. I wounded one, "who firſt aſſaulted me, and, I fear, deſperately; "but the reſt made me their priſoner. The coward "is determined to put the law in execution againſt "me: the proofs are undeniable. I have ſent "a challenge; and as I am the firſt tranſgreſſor "upon the ſtatute, I ſee no hopes of pardon. But "you have often charmed me with your leſſons of "fortitude; let me now, Sir, find them in your "example.

"And, my ſon, you ſhall find them. I am now "raiſed above this world, and all the pleaſures it "can produce. From this moment, I break from my "heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and "will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my "ſon, I will point out the way, and my ſoul ſhall "guide yours in the aſcent, for we will take our

"flight

"flight together. I now ſee, and am convinced "you can expect no pardon here; and I can only "exhort you to ſeek it at the greateſt tribunal, "where we both ſhall ſhortly anſwer. But let us "not be niggardly in our exhortation, but let all our "fellow-priſoners have a ſhare. Good goaler, let "them be permitted to ſtand here, while I attempt "to improve them." Thus ſaying, I made an effort to riſe from my ſtraw, but wanted ſtrength, and was able only to recline againſt the wall. The priſoners aſſembled according to my directions, for they loved to hear my counſel; my ſon and his mother ſupported me on either ſide: I looked and ſaw that none were wanting, and then addreſſed them with the following exhortation.

CHAP. XXIX.

The equal dealings of Providence demonſtrated with regard to the happy and the miſerable here below. That, from the nature of pleaſure and pain, the wretched muſt be repaid the balance of their ſufferings in the life hereafter.

MY friends, my children and fellow-ſufferers: When I reflect on the diſtribution of good and evil here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet ſtill more to ſuffer. Though we ſhould examine the whole world, we ſhall not find one man ſo happy as to have nothing left to wiſh for;

for; but we daily ſee thouſands, who, by ſuicide, ſhow us they have nothing left to hope. In this life, then, it appears, that we cannot be entirely bleſt; but yet we may be completely miſerable!

Why man ſhould thus feel pain—why our wretchedneſs ſhould be requiſite in the formation of univerſal felicity—why, when all other ſyſtems are made perfect by the perfection of their ſubordinate parts, the greateſt ſyſtem ſhould require, for its perfection, parts that are not only ſubordinate to others, but imperfect in themſelves? Theſe are queſtions that never can be explained, and might be uſeleſs, if known. On this ſubject, Providence has thought fit to elude our curioſity, ſatisfied with granting us motives to conſolation.

In this ſituation, man has called in the friendly aſſiſtance of philoſophy; and Heaven, ſeeing the incapacity of that to conſole him, has given him the aid of religion. The conſolations of philoſophy are very amuſing, but often fallacious. It tells us, that life is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy them; and on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have miſeries here, life is ſhort, and they will ſoon be over. Thus do theſe conſolations deſtroy each other; for, if life is a place of comfort, its ſhortneſs muſt be miſery; and if it be long, our griefs are protracted. Thus, philoſophy is weak; but religion comforts in an higher ſtrain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing it for another abode. When the good man leaves the body, and is all a glorious mind, he will find he has been making himſelf a hea en of happineſs here; while the wretch that has been maimed and contaminated by his vices, ſhrinks from his body with terror,

terror, and finds that he has anticipated the vengeance of Heaven. To religion then we muſt hold, in every circumſtance of life, for our trueſt comfort; for, if already we are happy, it is a pleaſure to think that we can make that happineſs unending; and if we are miſerable, it is very conſoling to think that there is a place of reſt. Thus, to the fortunate, religion holds out a continuance of bliſs; to the wretched, a change from pain.

But though religion is very kind to all men, it has promiſed peculiar rewards to the unhappy; the ſick, the naked, the houſeleſs, the heavy-laden, and the priſoner, have ever moſt frequent promiſes in our ſacred law. The author of our religion every where profeſſes himſelf the wretch's friend: and, unlike the falſe ones of this world, beſtows all his careſſes upon the forlorn. The unthinking have cenſured this as partiality, as a preference, without merit to deſerve it. But they never reflect, that it is not in the power even of Heaven itſelf, to make the offer of unceaſing felicity as great a gift to the happy as to the miſerable. To the firſt, eternity is but a ſingle bleſſing, ſince, at moſt, it but increaſes what they already poſſeſs. To the latter, it is a double advantage; for it diminiſhes their pain here, and rewards them with heavenly bliſs hereafter.

But providence is, in another reſpect, kinder to the poor than the rich; for as it thus makes the life after death more deſirable, ſo it ſmoothes the paſſage thither. The wretched have had a long familiarity with every face of terror. The man of ſorrows lays himſelf quietly down, without poſſeſſions to regret, and but few ties to ſtop his departure: he

feels only nature's pang in the final ſeparation; and this is no way greater than he has often fainted under before: for, after a certain degree of pain, every new breach that death opens in the conſtitution, nature kindly covers with inſenſibility.

Thus, Providence has given the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life, greater felicity in dying, and in heaven all that ſuperiority of pleaſure which ariſes from contraſted enjoyment. And this ſuperiority, my friends, is no ſmall advantage, and ſeems to be one of the pleaſures of the poor man in the parable; for though he was already in heaven, and felt all the raptures it could give, yet it was mentioned as an addition to his happineſs, that he had once been wretched, and now was comforted; that he had known what it was to be miſerable, and now felt what it was to be happy.

Thus, my friends, you ſee religion does what philoſophy could never do: it ſhows the equal dealings of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the ſame ſtandard; it gives to both rich and poor the ſame happineſs hereafter, and equal hopes to aſpire after it. But if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleaſure here, the poor have the endleſs ſatisfaction of knowing what it was once to be miſerable, when crowned with endleſs felicity hereafter; and, even though this ſhould be called a ſmall advantage, yet, being an eternal one, it muſt make up by duration what the temporal happineſs of the great may have exceeded by intenſeneſs.

Theſe

Theſe are therefore the conſolations which the wretched have peculiar to themſelves, and in which they are above the reſt of mankind; in other reſpects, they are below them. They who would know the miſeries of the poor, muſt ſee life, and endure it. To declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy, is only repeating what none either believe or practiſe. The men who have the neceſſaries of living are not poor; and they who want them muſt be miſerable. Yes, my friends, we muſt be miſerable. No vain efforts of a refined imagination can ſoothe the wants of nature, can give elaſtic ſweetneſs to the dank vapour of a dungeon, or eaſe to the throbbings of a broken heart. Let the philoſopher from his couch of ſoftneſs tell us that we can reſiſt all theſe. Alas! the effort by which we reſiſt them is ſtill the greateſt pain! Death is ſlight, and any man may ſuſtain it; but torments are dreadful, and theſe no man can endure.

To us, then, my friends, the promiſes of happineſs in heaven ſhould be peculiarly dear; for, if our reward be in this life alone, we are then, indeed, of all men the moſt miſerable. When I look round theſe gloomy walls, made to terrify as well as to confine us; this light, that only ſerves to ſhow the horrors of the place; thoſe ſhackles, that tyranny has impoſed, or crimes made neceſſary; when I ſurvey theſe emaciated looks, and hear thoſe groans; O my friends! what a glorious exchange would heaven be for theſe. To fly through regions unconfined as air, to baſk in the ſunſhine of eternal bliſs, to carrol over endleſs hymns of praiſe, to

have

have no maſter to threaten or inſult us, but the form of Goodneſs himſelf for ever in our eyes; when I think of theſe things, death becomes the meſſenger of very glad tidings; when I think of theſe things, his ſharpeſt arrow becomes the ſtaff of my ſupport; when I think of theſe things, what is there in life worth having? when I think of theſe things, what is there that ſhould not be ſpurn'd away? Kings in their palaces ſhould groan for ſuch advantages; but we, humbled as we are, ſhould yearn for them.

And ſhall theſe things be ours? Ours they will certainly be, if we but try for them; and, what is a comfort, we are ſhut out from many temptations that would retard our purſuit. Only let us try for them and they will certainly be ours, and, what is ſtill a comfort, ſhortly too; for if we look back on paſt life, it appears but a very ſhort ſpan, and whatever we may think of the reſt of life, it will yet be found of leſs duration: as we grow older the days ſeem to grow ſhorter, and our intimacy with time ever leſſens the perception of his ſtay. Then let us take comfort now, for we ſhall ſoon be at our journey's end; we ſhall ſoon lay down the heavy burden laid by Heaven upon us: and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and, like his horizon, ſtill flies before him; yet the time will certainly and ſhortly come, when we ſhall ceaſe from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world ſhall no more tread us to the earth; when we ſhall think with pleaſure on our ſufferings below; when we ſhall be ſurrounded with all our friends;

friends; or ſuch as deſerved our friendſhip; when our bliſs ſhall be unutterable, and ſtill, to crown all, unending.

CHAP. XXX.

Happier proſpects begin to appear. Let us be inflexible, and fortune will at laſt change in our favour.

WHEN I had thus finiſhed, and my audience was retired, the goaler, who was one of the moſt humane of his profeſſion, hoped I would not be diſpleaſed, as what he did was but his duty; obſerving, that he muſt be obliged to remove my ſon into a ſtronger cell, but that he ſhould be permitted to reviſit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and, graſping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again therefore laid me down, and one of my little ones ſat by my bed-ſide reading, when Mr. Jenkinſon entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter; for that ſhe was ſeen by a perſon, about two hours before, in a ſtrange gentleman's company, and that they had ſtopped at a neighbouring village for refreſhment, and ſeemed as if returning to town. He had ſcarce delivered this news, when the goaler came, with looks of haſte and pleaſure, to inform me that my daughter was found. Moſes came running in, a moment after, crying

crying out that his ſiſter Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr. Burchell.

Juſt as he delivered this news, my deareſt girl entered, and with looks almoſt wild with pleaſure, ran to kiſs me in a tranſport of affection. Her mother's tears and ſilence alſo ſhowed her pleaſure.—— "Here, pappa," cried the charming girl, "here "is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery; "to this gentleman's intrepidity I am indebted for "my happineſs and ſafety———" A kiſs from Mr. Burchell, whoſe pleaſure ſeemed even greater than hers, interrupted what ſhe was going to add.

"Ah! Mr. Burchell," cried I, "this is but a "wretched habitation you now find us in; and we "are now very different from what you laſt ſaw "us. You were ever our friend: we have long "diſcovered our errors with regard to you, and "repented of our ingratitude. After the vile uſage "you then received at my hands, I am almoſt "aſhamed to behold your face; yet I hope you'll "forgive me, as I was deceived by a baſe ungene-"rous wretch, who, under the maſk of friendſhip, "has undone me."

"It is impoſſible," replied Mr. Burchell, "that I "ſhould forgive you, as you never deſerved my re-"ſentment. I partly ſaw your deluſion then, and, "as it was out of my power to reſtrain, I could "only pity it."

"It was ever my conjecture," cried I, "that your "mind was noble; but now I find it ſo. But tell "me,

"me, my dear child, how haſt thou been relieved,
"or who the ruffians were who carried thee away?"
"Indeed, Sir," replied ſhe, "as to the villain
"who carried me off, I am yet ignorant. For as
"my mamma and I were walking out, he came be-
"hind us, and, almoſt before I could call for help,
"forced me into the poſt-chaiſe, and in an inſtant
"the horſes drove away. I met ſeveral on the
"road, to whom I cried out for aſſiſtance; but
"they diſregarded my intreaties. In the mean time,
"the ruffian himſelf uſed every art to hinder me
"from crying out: he flattered and threatened by
"turns, and ſwore, that if I continued but ſilent,
"he intended no harm. In the mean time, I had
"broken the canvas that he had drawn up, and
"whom ſhould I perceive at ſome diſtance but our
"old friend Mr. Burchell, walking along with his
"uſual ſwiftneſs, with the great ſtick for which we
"uſed ſo much to ridicule him. As ſoon as we
"came within hearing, I called out to him by
"name, and intreated his help. I repeated my
"exclamations ſeveral times; upon which, with a
"very loud voice, he bid the poſtilion ſtop; but
"the boy took no notice, but drove on with ſtill
"greater ſpeed. I now thought he could never
"overtake us, when, in leſs than a minute, I ſaw
"Mr. Burchell come running up by the ſide of the
"horſes, and with one blow, knock the poſtilion
"to the ground: the horſes, when he was fallen,
"ſoon ſtopt of themſelves; and the ruffian ſtep-
"ping out, with oaths and menaces drew his ſword,
"and ordered him at his peril to retire; but Mr.
"Burchell

" Burchell running up, ſhivered his ſword to pieces,
" and then purſued him for near a quarter of a mile;
" but he made his eſcape. I was at this time come
" out myſelf, willing to aſſiſt my deliverer; but he
" ſoon returned to me in triumph. The poſtilion,
" who was recovered, was going to make his eſcape
" too; but Mr. Burchell ordered him at his peril to
" mount again, and drive back to town. Finding
" it impoſſible to reſiſt, he reluctantly complied;
" though the wound he had received ſeemed, to me
" at leaſt, to be dangerous. He continued to com-
" plain of the pain as we drove along, ſo that he at
" laſt excited Mr. Burchell's compaſſion, who, at my
" requeſt, exchanged him for another, at an inn
" where we called on our return."

" Welcome, then," cried I, " my child; and
" thou, her gallant deliverer, a thouſand welcomes.
" Though our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts
" are ready to receive you. And now, Mr. Bur-
" chell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think
" her a recompence, ſhe is yours. If you can ſtoop
" to an alliance with a family ſo poor as mine, take
" her, obtain her conſent, as I know you have her
" heart, and you have mine. And let me tell you,
" Sir, that I give you no ſmall treaſure; ſhe has
" been celebrated for beauty, it is true; but that is
" not my meaning, I give you up a treaſure in her
" mind."

" But I ſuppoſe, Sir," cried Mr. Burchell, " that
" you are appriſed of my circumſtances, and of my
" incapacity to ſupport her as ſhe deſerves?"

" I

"If your preſent objection," replied I, "be "meant as an evaſion of my offer, I deſiſt: but I "know no man ſo worthy to deſerve her as you: "and if I could give her thouſands, and thouſands "ſought her from me, yet my honeſt, brave Bur-"chell, ſhould be my deareſt choice."

To all this, his ſilence alone ſeemed to give a mortifying refuſal; and, without the leaſt reply to my offer, he demanded if we could not be furniſhed with refreſhments from the next inn? To which being anſwered in the affirmative, he ordered them to ſend in the beſt dinner that could be provided upon ſuch ſhort notice. He beſpoke alſo a dozen of their beſt wine, and ſome cordials for me; adding, with a ſmile, that he would ſtretch a little for once, and, though in a priſon, aſſerted that he was never better diſpoſed to be merry. The waiter ſoon made his appearance with preparations for dinner; a table was lent us by the goaler, who ſeemed remarkably aſſiduous; the wine was diſpoſed in order, and two very well dreſt diſhes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy ſituation, and we all ſeemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulneſs by the relation. But it was in vain that I appeared to be cheerful; the circumſtances of my unfortunate ſon broke through all efforts to diſſemble; ſo that I was at laſt obliged to damp our mirth, by relating his misfortunes, and wiſhing that he might be permitted to ſhare with us in this little interval of ſatisfaction. After my gueſts were recovered from the conſternation my account had produced, I requeſted alſo,

that Mr. Jenkinſon, a fellow-priſoner, might be admitted; and the goaler granted my requeſt, with an air of unuſual ſubmiſſion. The clanking of my ſon's irons was no ſooner heard along the paſſage, than his ſiſter ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr. Burchell, in the mean time, aſked me if my ſon's name was George? to which, replying in the affirmative, he ſtill continued ſilent. As ſoon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr. Burchell with a look of aſtoniſhment and reverence. "Come on," cried I, "my ſon; though "we are fallen very low, yet Providence has been "pleaſed to grant us ſome ſmall relaxation from "pain. Thy ſiſter is reſtored to us, and there is "her deliverer; to that brave man it is that I am "indebted for yet having a daughter; give him my "boy, the hand of friendſhip; he deſerves our "warmeſt gratitude."

My ſon ſeemed all this while regardleſs of what I ſaid, and ſtill continued fixed at reſpectful diſtance.——"My dear brother," cried his ſiſter, "why don't you thank my good deliverer? the "brave ſhould ever love each other.

He ſtill continued his ſilence and aſtoniſhment, till our gueſt at laſt perceived himſelf to be known; and, aſſuming all his native dignity, deſired my ſon to come forward. Never before had I ſeen any thing ſo truly majeſtic, as the air he aſſumed upon this occaſion. The greateſt object in the univerſe, ſays a certain philoſopher, is a good man ſtruggling with adverſity; yet there is ſtill a greater, which is the

good

good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my ſon for ſome time with a ſuperior air, "I again find," ſaid he, "unthinking boy, that the "ſame crime"—But here he was interrupted by one of the goaler's ſervants, who came to inform us, that a perſon of diſtinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and ſeveral attendants, ſent his reſpects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he ſhould think proper to be waited upon——"Bid the fellow wait," cried our gueſt, "till I ſhall have leiſure to receive him;" and then turning to my ſon, "I again find, Sir," proceeded he, "that you are guilty of the ſame offence for "which you once had my reproof, and for which the "law is now preparing its juſteſt puniſhments. You "imagine, perhaps, that a contempt for your own "life gives you a right to take that of another: "but where, Sir, is the difference between a duel-"iſt, who hazards a life of no value, and the mur-"derer who acts with greater ſecurity? Is it any "diminution of the gameſter's fraud, when he al-"ledges that he has ſtaked a counter?"

"Alas, Sir," cried I, "whoever you are, pity "the poor miſguided creature; for what he has "done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who, "in the bitterneſs of her reſentment, required him, "upon her bleſſing, to avenge her quarrel. Here, "Sir, is the letter, which will ſerve to convince "you of her imprudence, and diminiſh his guilt."

He took the letter, and haſtily read it over, "This," ſays he, "though not a perfect excuſe, is

" ſuch a palliation of his fault, as induces me to for-
" give him. And now, Sir," continued he, kindly taking my ſon by the hand, " I ſee you are ſurpriſed
" at finding me here; but I have often viſited pri-
" ſons upon occaſions leſs intereſting. I am now
" come to ſee juſtice done a worthy man, for whom
" I have the moſt ſincere eſteem. I have long been
" a diſguiſed ſpectator of thy father's benevolence.
" I have, at his little dwelling, enjoyed reſpect un-
" contaminated by flattery; and have received that
" happineſs that courts could not give, from the
" amuſing ſimplicity round his fire-ſide. My
" nephew has been appriſed of my intentions of
" coming here, and I find is arrived: it would be
" wronging him and you to condemn him without
" examination: if there be injury, there ſhall be
" redreſs; and this I may ſay, without boaſting,
" that none have ever taxed the injuſtice of Sir
" William Thornhill."

We now found the perſonage whom we had ſo long entertained as an harmleſs amuſing companion, was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whoſe virtues and ſingularities ſcarce any were ſtrangers. The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great intereſt, to whom ſenates liſtened with applauſe, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, ſeemed to ſhrink with apprehenſion; but Sophia, who, a few minutes before, thought him her own, now perceiving the immenſe diſtance

diſtance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

"Ah, Sir," cried my wife with a piteous aſpect, "how is it poſſible that I can ever have your for-"giveneſs? the ſlights you received from me the laſt "time I had the honour of ſeeing you at our houſe, "and the joke which I audaciouſly threw out; "theſe jokes, Sir, I fear, can never be forgiven."

"My dear good lady," returned he, with a ſmile, "if you had your joke, I had my anſwer: I'll leave "it to all the company if mine were not as good as "yours. To ſay the truth, I know nobody whom "I am diſpoſed to be angry with at preſent, but "the fellow who ſo frighted my little girl here. I "had not even time to examine the raſcal's per-"ſon, ſo as to deſcribe him in an advertiſement. "Can you tell me, Sophia, my dear, whether you "ſhould know him again?"

"Indeed, Sir," replied ſhe, "I can't be poſitive, "yet now I recollect he had a large mark over one "of his eye-brows." "I aſk pardon, Madam," interrupted Jenkinſon, who was by, "but be ſo good "as to inform me if the fellow wore his own red "hair?"——"Yes, I think ſo," cried Sophia.—— "And did your Honour," continued he, turning to Sir William, "obſerve the length of his legs?"—— "I can't be ſure of their length," cried the Baronet, "but I am convinced of their ſwiftneſs; for "he out-ran me, which is what I thought few men "in the kingdom could have done."——"Pleaſe "your Honour," cried Jenkinſon, "I know the "man: it is certainly the ſame; the beſt runner in

" England; he has beaten Pinwire of Newcaſtle: " Timothy Baxter is his name; I know him perfect- " ly, and the very place of his retreat this moment. " If your Honour will bid Mr. Goaler let two of " his men go with me, I'll engage to produce him " to you in an hour at fartheſt." Upon this the goaler was called, who inſtantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him? " Yes, pleaſe " your Honour," replied the goaler, " I know Sir " William Thornhill well; and every body that " knows any thing of him, will deſire to know " more of him."——" Well, then," ſaid the Baronet, " my requeſt is, that you will permit this " man and two of your ſervants to go upon a meſ- " ſage, by my authority; and, as I am in the com- " miſſion of the peace, I undertake to ſecure you." " Your promiſe is ſufficient," replied the other; " and you may, at a minute's warning, ſend them " over England, whenever your Honour thinks " fit."

In purſuance of the goaler's compliance, Jenkinſon was diſpatched in ſearch of Timothy Baxter, while we were amuſed with the aſſiduity of our youngeſt boy Bill, who had juſt come in, and climbed up to Sir William's neck in order to kiſs him. His mother was immediately going to chaſtiſe his familiarity; but the worthy man prevented her; and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, " What, Bill, you chubby rogue," cried he, " do you remember your old friend Burchell? and " Dick, my old veteran, are you here? you ſhall " ſhall find I have not forgot you." So ſaying, he gave

gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows eat very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very ſcanty breakfaſt.

We now ſat down to dinner, which was almoſt cold; but previouſly, my arm ſtill continuing painful, Sir William wrote a preſcription, for he had made the ſtudy of phyſic his amuſement, and was more than moderately ſkilled in the profeſſion: this being ſent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dreſſed, and I found almoſt inſtantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the goaler himſelf, who was willing to do our gueſt all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined, another meſſage was brought from his nephew, deſiring permiſſion to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honour; with which requeſt the Baronet complied, and deſired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.

CHAP. XXXI.

Former benevolence now repaid with unexpected intereſt.

MR. THORNHILL made his entrance with a ſmile which he ſeldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulſed with an air of diſdain. "No fawning, Sir, at preſent," cried the Baronet, with a look of ſeverity: "the only way to my heart is by the road of honour;

" nour; but here I only ſee complicated inſtances " of falſehood, cowardice and oppreſſion. How is " it, Sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you " profeſſed a friendſhip, is uſed thus hardly? His " daughter vilely ſeduced, as a recompence for his " hoſpitality; and he himſelf thrown into a priſon, " perhaps but for reſenting the inſult? His ſon, too, " whom you feared to face as a mah——".

" Is it poſſible, Sir," interrupted his nephew, " that my uncle could object that as a crime, which " his repeated inſtructions alone have perſuaded me " to avoid?"

" Your rebuke," cried Sir William, " is juſt; you " have acted, in this inſtance, prudently and well, " though not quite as your father would have done. " My brother, indeed, was the ſoul of honour: but " thou——yes, you have acted in this inſtance per- " fectly right, and it has my warmeſt approbation."

" And I hope," ſaid his nephew, " that the reſt " of my conduct will not be found to deſerve cen- " ſure. I appeared, Sir, with this gentleman's daugh- " ter at ſome places of public amuſement: thus, " what was levity, ſcandal called by a harſher name; " and it was reported that I had debauched her. I " waited on her father in perſon, willing to clear the " thing to his ſatisfaction, and he received me with " only inſult and abuſe. As for the reſt, with re- " gard to his being here, my attorney and ſteward " can beſt inform you, as I commit the manage- " ment of buſineſs entirely to them. If he has con- " tracted debts, and is unwilling, or even unable to " pay them, it is their buſineſs to proceed in this

" manner;

" manner; and I ſee no hardſhip or injuſtice in pur-
" ſuing the moſt legal means of redreſs."

" If this," cried Sir William, " be as you have
" ſtated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your
" offence; and though your conduct might have
" been more generous, in not ſuffering this gentle-
" man to be oppreſſed by ſubordinate tyranny, yet
" it has been at leaſt equitable."

" He cannot contradict a ſingle particular," re-
plied the Squire; " I defy him to do ſo; and ſeve-
" ral of my ſervants are ready to atteſt what I ſay.
" Thus, Sir," continued he, finding that I was ſi-
lent, for in fact I could not contradict him, " thus,
" Sir, my own innocence is vindicated; but though,
" at your intreaty, I am ready to forgive this gentle-
" man every other offence, yet his attempts to leſſen
" me in your eſteem excite a reſentment that I can-
" not govern; and this too, at a time when his ſon
" was actually preparing to take away my life: this,
" I ſay, was ſuch guilt, that I am determined to let
" the law take its courſe. I have here the challenge
" that was ſent me, and two witneſſes to prove it;
" one of my ſervants has been wounded dangerouſ-
" ly; and even though my uncle himſelf ſhould diſ-
" ſuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will
" ſee public juſtice done, and he ſhall ſuffer for it."

" Thou monſter," cried my wife, " haſt thou not
" had vengeance enough already, but muſt my poor
" boy feel thy cruelty? I hope that good Sir Wil-
" liam will protect us; for my ſon is as innocent
" as a child; I am ſure he is, and never did harm
to man."

"Madam," replied the good man, "your wiſhes "for his ſafety are not greater than mine; but I am "ſorry to find his guilt too plain; and if my ne-"phew perſiſts——" But the appearance of Jenkinſon and the goaler's two ſervants now called off our attention, who entered, hauling in a tall man, very genteelly dreſſed, and anſwering the deſcription already given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter.—"Here," cried Jenkinſon, pulling him in, "here we have him; and if "ever there was a candidate for Tyburn, this is "one."

The moment Mr. Thornhill perceived the priſoner, and Jenkinſon who had him in cuſtody, he ſeemed to ſhrink back with terror. His face became pale with conſcious guilt, and he would have withdrawn; but Jenkinſon, who perceived his deſign, ſtopped him.—"What, Squire," cried he, "are "you aſhamed of your two old acquaintances, Jen-"kinſon and Baxter? But this is the way that all "great men forget their friends, though I am re-"ſolved we will not forget you. Our priſoner, "pleaſe your honour," continued he, turning to Sir William, "has already confeſſed all. This is "the gentleman reported to be ſo dangerouſly "wounded. He declares, that it was Mr. Thorn-"hill who firſt put him upon this affair: that he "gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear "like a gentleman, and furniſhed him with the "poſt-chaiſe. The plan was laid between them, "that he ſhould carry off the young lady to a "place of ſafety, and that there he ſhould threaten

"and

" and terrify her; but Mr. Thornhill was to come in,
" in the mean time, as if by accident, to her reſcue,
" and that they ſhould fight a while, and then he
" was to run off; by which Mr. Thornhill would
" have the better opportunity of gaining her af-
" fections himſelf, under the character of her de-
" fender."

Sir William remembered the coat to have been frequently worn by his nephew; and all the reſt the priſoner himſelf confirmed by a more circumſtantial account; concluding, that Mr. Thornhill had often declared to him, that he was in love with both ſiſters at the ſame time.

" Heavens!" cried Sir William, " what a viper
" have I been foſtering in my boſom! And ſo fond
" of public juſtice too as he ſeemed to be! But
" he ſhall have it: ſecure him, Mr. Goaler:—yet
" hold; I fear there is not legal evidence to detain
" him."

Upon this, Mr. Thornhill, with the utmoſt humility, intreated, that two ſuch abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences againſt him, but that his ſervants ſhould be examined.—" Your
" ſervants!" replied Sir William, " wretch, call
" them yours no longer: but come, let us hear
" what thoſe fellows have to ſay; let his butler be
" called."

When the butler was introduced, he ſoon perceived by his former maſter's looks, that all his power was now over. " Tell me," cried Sir William, ſternly, " have you ever ſeen your maſter
" and that fellow dreſſed up in his clothes, in com-

" pany

"pany together?" "Yes, please your Honour," cried the butler, "a thousand times: he was the "man that always brought him his ladies."——"How," interrupted young Mr. Thornhill, "this "to my face!"——"Yes," replied the butler, "or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Mr. "Thornhill, I never either loved you, or liked "you; and I don't care if I tell you now a piece "of my mind."——"Now then," cried Jenkinson, "tell his Honour whether you know any thing "of me."——"I can't say," replied the butler, "that I know much good of you. The night that "gentleman's daughter was deluded to our house, "you were one of them."——"So then," cried Sir William, "I find you have brought a very fine "witness to prove your innocence: thou stain to "humanity! to associate with such wretches! But," (continuing his examination,) "you tell me, Mr. "Butler, that this was the person who brought him "this old gentlemen's daughter."——"No, please "your Honour," replied the butler; "he did not "bring her, for the Squire himself undertook that "business; but he brought the priest that pretend-"ed to marry them."——"It is but too true," cried Jenkinson; I cannot deny it; that was the em-"ployment assigned me; and I confess it, to my "confusion."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Baronet, "how "every new discovery of his villainy alarms me! "All his guilt is now too plain; and I find his pre-"sent prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cow-"ardice, and revenge. At my request, Mr. Goal-

"er,

"er, ſet this young officer, now your priſoner, "free, and truſt to me for the conſequences. I'll "make it my buſineſs to ſet the affair in a proper "light to my friend, the magiſtrate who has commit-"ted him. But where is the unfortunate young lady "herſelf? Let her appear to confront the wretch; "I long to know by what arts he has ſeduced "her. Intreat her to come in.——Where is ſhe?"

"Ah, Sir," ſaid I, "that queſtion ſtings me to "the heart: I was once, indeed, happy in a daugh-"ter; but her miſeries———" Another interruption here prevented me; for who ſhould make her appearance but Miſs Arabella Wilmot, who was next day to have been married to Mr. Thornhill. Nothing could equal her ſurpriſe at ſeeing Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened, that ſhe and the old gentleman her father were paſſing through the town, on their way to her aunt's, who had inſiſted that her nuptials with Mr. Thornhill ſhould be conſummated at her houſe; but ſtopping for refreſhment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was therefore from the window that the young lady happened to obſerve one of my little boys playing in the ſtreet; and inſtantly ſending a footman to bring the child to her, ſhe learned from him ſome account of our misfortunes; but was ſtill kept ignorant of young Mr. Thornhill's being the cauſe. Though her father made ſeveral remonſtrances on the impropriety of going to a priſon to viſit us, yet they were ineffectual; ſhe deſired the child to conduct

duct her; which he did; and it was thus ſhe ſurpriſed us at a juncture ſo unexpected.

Nor can I go on, without a reflection on thoſe accidental meetings, which though they happen every day, ſeldom excite our ſurprize but upon ſome extraordinary occaſion, To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleaſure and convenience of our lives? How many ſeeming accidents muſt unite before we can be clothed or fed? The peaſant muſt be diſpoſed to labour, the ſhower muſt fall, the wind fill the merchant's ſail, or numbers muſt want the uſual ſupply.

We all continued ſilent for ſome moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compaſſion and aſtoniſhment, which gave new finiſhings to her beauty. "Indeed, my dear Mr. Thornhill," cried ſhe to the Squire, who ſhe ſuppoſed was come here to ſuccour and not to oppreſs us, "I take it "a little unkindly, that you ſhould come here "without me, or never inform me of the ſituation "of a family ſo dear to us both: you know I ſhould "take as much pleaſure in contributing to the re-"lief of my reverend old maſter here, whom I "ſhall ever eſteem, as you can. But I find that, "like your uncle, you take a pleaſure in doing "good in ſecret."

"He find pleaſure in doing good!" cried Sir William, interrupting her. "No, my dear; his plea-"ſures are as baſe as he is. You ſee in him, Ma-"dam, as complete a villain as ever diſgraced hu-"manity. A wretch, who, after having deluded

"this

"this poor man's daughter, after plotting againſt "the innocence of her ſiſter, has thrown the fa- "ther into priſon, and the eldeſt ſon into fetters, "becauſe he had courage to face his betrayer. And "give me leave, Madam, now to congratulate you "upon an eſcape from the embraces of ſuch a "monſter."

"O goodneſs!" cried the lovely girl, "how have "I been deceived! Mr. Thornhill informed me for "certain, that this gentleman's eldeſt ſon, Captain "Primroſe, was gone off to America with his new- "married lady."

"My ſweeteſt Miſs," cried my wife, "he has "told you nothing but falſehoods. My ſon George "never left the kingdom, nor ever was married. "Though you have forſaken him, he has always "loved you too well to think of any body elſe; "and I have heard him ſay, he would die a ba- "chelor for your ſake." She then proceeded to expatiate upon the ſincerity of her ſon's paſſion; ſhe ſet his duel with Mr. Thornhill in a proper light; from thence ſhe made a rapid digreſſion to the Squire's debaucheries, his pretended marriages, and ended with a moſt inſulting picture of his cow- ardice.

"Good heavens!" cried Miſs Wilmot, "how "very near I have been to the brink of ruin! But "how great is my pleaſure to have eſcaped it! Ten "thouſand falſehoods has this gentleman told me! "He had at laſt art enough to perſuade me, that "my promiſe to the only man I eſteemed was no "longer binding, ſince he had been unfaithful.

"By

"his falſehoods, I was taught to deteſt one equally "brave and generous."

But by this time my ſon was freed from the incumbrances of juſtice, as the perſon ſuppoſed to be wounded was detected to be an impoſtor. Mr. Jenkinſon alſo, who had acted as his valet de chambre, had dreſſed up his hair, and furniſhed him with whatever was neceſſary to make a genteel appearance. He now, therefore, entered, handſomely dreſſed in his regimentals; and, without vanity, (for I am above it,) he appeared as handſome a fellow as ever wore a military dreſs. As he entered, he made Miſs Wilmot a modeſt and diſtant bow, for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could reſtrain the impatience of his bluſhing miſtreſs to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to diſcover the real ſenſations of her heart, for having forgotten her former promiſe, and having ſuffered herſelf to be deluded by an impoſtor. My ſon appeared amazed at her condeſcenſion, and could ſcarce believe it real.—— "Sure, Madam," cried he, "this is but deluſion! "I can never have merited this! To be bleſt thus, "is to be too happy."—— "No, Sir," replied ſhe, "I have been deceived, baſely deceived, elſe nothing "could have ever made me unjuſt to my promiſe. "You know my friendſhip; you have long known "it; but forget what I have done; and, as you "once had my warmeſt vows of conſtancy, you "ſhall now have them repeated; and be aſſured, "that if your Arabella cannot be yours, ſhe ſhall "never

"never be another's."——"And no other's you "shall be," cried Sir William, "if I have any in-"fluence with your father."

This hint was sufficient for my son Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had happened. But, in the mean time, the Squire perceiving that he was on every side undone, now finding that no hopes were left from flattery or dissimulation, concluded, that his wisest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus, laying aside all shame. he appeared the open hardy villain. "I find, then," cried he, "that I am to expect "no justice here; but I am resolved it shall be "done me. You shall know, Sir, turning to Sir "William, "I am no longer a poor dependant "upon your favours. I scorn them. Nothing "can keep Miss Wilmot's fortune from me, which, "I thank her father's assiduity, is pretty large. The "articles, and a bond for her fortune, are signed, "and safe in my possession. It was her fortune, not "her person, that induced me to wish for this "match; and possessed of the one, let who will "take the other."

This was an alarming blow: Sir William was sensible of the justice of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage-articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked, if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him. "Though fortune," said she,

ſhe, "is out of my power, at leaſt I have my hand "to give.

"And that, Madam," cried her real lover, "was "indeed all that you ever had to give, at leaſt all "that I ever thought worth the acceptance. And "I now proteſt, my Arabella, by all that's happy, "your want of fortune this moment increaſes my "pleaſure, as it ſerves to convince my ſweet girl of "my ſincerity.

Mr. Wilmot now entering, he ſeemed not a little pleaſed at the danger his daughter had juſt eſcaped, and readily conſented to a diſſolution of the match. But finding that her fortune, which was ſecured to Mr. Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his diſappointment. He ſaw now that his money muſt all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being a raſcal, but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He ſat, therefore, for ſome minutes, employed in the moſt mortifying ſpeculations, till Sir William attempted to leſſen his anxiety.——"I muſt confeſs," Sir, cried he, "that your preſent diſappointment does not "diſpleaſe me. Your immoderate paſſion for wealth "is now juſtly puniſhed. But, though the young "lady cannot be rich, ſhe has ſtill a competence "ſufficient to give content. Here you ſee an ho-"neſt young ſoldier, who is willing to take her "without fortune; they have long loved each other; "and for the friendſhip I bear his father, my inte-"reſt ſhall not be wanting in his promotion. Leave "then, that ambition which diſappoint you,

"and

" and for once admit that happineſs which courts " your acceptance."

" Sir William, replied the other gentleman, " be " aſſured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor " will I now. If ſhe ſtill continues to love this " young gentleman, let her have him, with all my " heart. There is ſtill, thank Heaven, ſome for- " tune left, and your promiſe will make it ſome- " thing more. Only let my old friend here (mean- " ing me) give me a promiſe of ſettling ſix thouſand " pounds upon my girl if ever he ſhould come to " his fortune, and I am ready this night to be the " firſt to join them together."

As it now remained with me to make the young couple happy, I readily gave a promiſe of making the ſettlement he required, which, to one who had ſo little expectations as I, was no great favour. We had now therefore the ſatisfaction of ſeeing them fly into each other's arms in a tranſport. " After all " my misfortunes," cried my ſon George, " to be " thus rewarded! Sure this is more than I could " ever have preſumed to hope for. To be poſſeſſed " of all that's good, and after ſuch an interval of " pain! My warmeſt wiſhes could never riſe ſo " high!"—" Yes, my George, " returned his lovely bride, " now let the wretch take my for- " tune; ſince you are happy without it, ſo am I. " O what an exchange have I made, from the " baſeſt of men, to the deareſt, beſt!——Let him " enjoy our fortune; I can now be happy even in " indigence."——" And I promiſe you," cried the Squire, with a malicious grin, " that I ſhall be very

" happy

" happy with what you deſpiſe."——" Hold, " hold, Sir," cried Jenkinſon, " there are two " words to that bargain. As for that lady's for- " tune, Sir, you ſhall never touch a ſingle ſtiver " of it. Pray your honour," continued he to Sir William, " can the Squire have this lady's fortune " if he be married to another?"——" How can you " make ſuch a ſimple demand?" replied the baronet, " undoubtedly he cannot."——" I am ſorry " for that," cried Jenkinſon; " for as this gentle- " man and I have been old fellow-ſporters, I have " a friendſhip for him. But I muſt declare, well " as I love him, that his contract is not worth a to- " bacco-ſtopper, for he is married already."—— " You lie like a raſcal," returned the Squire, who ſeemed rouſed by this inſult; " I never was legally " married to any woman."——" Indeed, begging " your Honour's pardon," replied the other, " you " were, and I hope you will ſhow a proper return " of friendſhip to your own honeſt Jenkinſon, who " brings you a wife, and, if the company reſtrain " their curioſity a few minutes, they ſhall ſee her." ——So ſaying, he went off with his uſual celerity, and left us unable to form any probable conjecture as to his deſign.——" Ay, let him go," cried the Squire, " whatever elſe I may have done, I defy " him there. I am too old now to be frightened " with ſquibs."

" I am ſurpriſed," ſaid the Baronet, " what the " fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of " humour, I ſuppoſe?"——" Perhaps, Sir," replied I, " he may have a more ſerious meaning.

" For,

"For, when we reflect on the various ſchemes "this gentleman has laid to ſeduce innocence, per- "haps ſome one, more artful than the reſt, has "been found able to deceive him. When we con- "ſider what numbers he has ruined, how many "parents now feel with anguiſh the infamy and the "contamination which he has brought into their "families, it would not ſurpriſe me, if ſome one "of them———Amazement! Do I ſee my loſt "daughter! Do I hold her! It is, it is my life, my "happineſs. I thought thee loſt, my Olivia, yet "ſtill I hold thee——and ſtill thou ſhalt live to "bleſs me."——The warmeſt tranſports of the fondeſt lover were not greater than mine, when I ſaw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms whoſe ſilence only ſpoke her raptures. "And art thou returned to me, my darling," cried I, "to be my comfort in age?" "That ſhe is," cried Jenkinſon, "and make much of her; for ſhe "is your own honourable child, and as honeſt a "woman as any in the whole room, let the other "be who ſhe will. And as for you, Squire, as "ſure as you ſtand there, this young lady is your "lawful wedded wife. And, to convince you that "I ſpeak nothing but truth, here is the licence "by which you were married together." So ſaying, he put the licence into the Baronet's hands, who read it, and found it perfect in every reſpect. "And now, gentlemen," continued he, "I find "you are ſurpriſed at all this; but a few words will "explain the difficulty. That there Squire of re- "nown, for whom I have a great friendſhip, but

"that's

"that's between ourſelves, has often employed me "in doing odd things for him. Among the reſt, he "commiſſioned me to procure him a falſe licence, "and a falſe prieſt, in order to deceive this young "lady. But, as I was very much his friend, what "did I do, but got a true licence, and a true "prieſt, and married them both as faſt as the cloth "could make them. Perhaps you'll think it was "generoſity that made me do all this. But, no. "To my ſhame I confeſs it, my only deſign was "to keep the licence, and let the Squire know that "I could prove it upon him whenever I thought "proper, and ſo make him come down whenever I "wanted money." A burſt of pleaſure now ſeemed to fill the whole apartment; our joy even reached to the common room, where the priſoners themſelves ſympathized,

And ſhook their chains
In tranſport and rude harmony.

Happineſs was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek ſeemed fluſhed with pleaſure. To be thus reſtored to reputation, to friends, and fortune, at once, was a rapture ſufficient to ſtop the progreſs of decay, and reſtore former health and vivacity. But perhaps, among all, there was not one who felt ſincerer pleaſure than I. Still holding the dear loved child in my arms, I aſked my heart if theſe tranſports were not deluſion? "How could "you," cried I, turning to Mr. Jenkinſon, "How "could you add to my miſeries, by the ſtory of her "death?

"death? But it matters not; my pleaſure at find-
"ing her again is more than a recompence for the
"pain."

"As to your queſtion," replied Jenkinſon, "that
"is eaſily anſwered. I thought the only probable
"means of freeing you from priſon was by ſub-
"mitting to the Squire, and conſenting to his mar-
"riage with the other young lady. But theſe
"you had vowed never to grant while your daugh-
"ter was living; there was, therefore, no other
"method to bring things to bear, but by per-
"ſuading you that ſhe was dead. I prevailed on
"your wife to join in the deceit; and we have not
"had a fit opportunity of undeceiving you till
"now."

In the whole aſſembly, now, there only appeared two faces that did not glow with tranſport. Mr. Thornhill's aſſurance had entirely forſaken him: he now ſaw the gulf of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and, in a voice of piercing miſery, implored compaſſion. Sir William was going to ſpurn him away; but, at my requeſt, he raiſed him; and, after pauſing a few moments, "Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude," cried he, "deſerve no tenderneſs; yet thou ſhalt not be en-
"tirely forſaken; a bare competence ſhall be ſup-
"plied, to ſupport the wants of life, but not its
"follies. This young lady, thy wife, ſhall be put
"in poſſeſſion of a third part of that fortune which
"once was thine, and from her tenderneſs alone
"thou art to expect any extraordinary ſupplies for

"the

" the future." He was going to expreſs his gratitude for ſuch kindneſs in a ſet ſpeech; but the Baronet prevented him, by bidding him not aggravate his meanneſs, which was already but too apparent. He ordered him at the ſame time to be gone, and from all his former domeſtics to chooſe one, ſuch as he ſhould think proper, which was all that ſhould be granted to attend him.

As ſoon as he left us, Sir William very politely ſtept up to his new niece with a ſmile, and wiſhed her joy. His example was followed by Miſs Wilmot and her father; my wife too kiſſed her daughter with much affection, as, to uſe her own expreſſion, ſhe was now made an honeſt woman of. Sophia and Moſes followed in turn, and even our benefactor Jenkinſon deſired to be admitted to that honour. Our ſatisfaction ſeemed ſcarce capable of increaſe. Sir William, whoſe greateſt pleaſure was in doing good, now looked round, with a countenance open as the ſun, and ſaw nothing but joy in the looks of all, except that of my daughter Sophia, who, for ſome reaſons we could not comprehend, did not ſeem perfectly ſatisfied. " I think now," cried he, with a ſmile, " that all the company, ex-
" cept one or two, ſeem perfectly happy. There
" only remains an act of juſtice for me to do.
" You are ſenſible, Sir," continued he, turning to me, " of the obligations we both owe Mr. Jen-
" kinſon; and it is but juſt we ſhould both reward
" him for it. Miſs Sophia will, I am ſure, make
" him very happy; and he ſhall have from me five
" hundred pounds as her fortune; and upon this, I
" am

"am ſure, they can live very comfortably together. "Come, Miſs Sophia, what ſay you to this match "of my making? Will you have him?"——My poor girl ſeemed almoſt ſinking into her mother's arms at the hideous propoſal.——"Have him, "Sir," cried ſhe faintly, "No, Sir, never."—— "What!" cried he again, "not have Mr. Jenkin"ſon, your benefactor, an handſome young fellow, "with five hundred pounds, and good expecta"tions!"——"I beg, Sir," returned ſhe, ſcarce able to ſpeak, "that you will deſiſt, and not make "me ſo very wretched."——"Was ever ſuch "obſtinacy known," cried he again, "to refuſe "a man whom the family has ſuch infinite obli"gations to, who has preſerved your ſiſter, and "who has five hundred pounds! What! not have "him!"——"No, Sir, never," replied ſhe angrily; "I'd ſooner die firſt."——"If that be "the caſe then," cried he, "if you will not have "him—I think I muſt have you myſelf." And ſo ſaying, he caught her to his breaſt with ardour. "My loveliеſt, my moſt ſenſible of girls," cried he, "how could you ever think your own Burchell "could deceive you, or that Sir William Thornhill "could ever ceaſe to admire a miſtreſs that loved "him for himſelf alone? I have, for ſome years, "ſought for a woman, who, a ſtranger to my for"tune, could think that I had merit as a man. "After having tried in vain, even amongſt the pert "and the ugly, how great, at laſt, muſt be my "rapture, to have made a conqueſt over ſuch ſenſe "and ſuch heavenly beauty!" Then turning to Jen-

kinſon, "As I cannot, Sir, part with this young "lady myſelf, for ſhe has taken a fancy to the cut "of my face, all the recompence I can make is "to give you her fortune; and you may call upon "my ſteward to-morrow, for five hundred pounds." Thus we had all our compliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent the ſame round of ceremony that her ſiſter had done before. In the mean time, Sir William's gentleman appeared, to tell us that the equipages were ready to carry us to the inn, where every thing was prepared for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and left thoſe gloomy manſions of ſorrow. The generous Baronet ordered forty pounds to be diſtributed among the priſoners; and Mr. Wilmot induced, by his example, gave half that ſum. We were received below by the ſhouts of the villagers, and I ſaw and ſhook by the hand two or three of my honeſt pariſhioners, who were among the number. They attended us to our inn, where a ſumptuous entertainment was provided, and coarſer proviſions diſtributed in great quantities among the populace.

After ſupper, as my ſpirits were exhauſted by the alternation of pleaſure and pain which they had ſuſtained during the day, I aſked permiſſion to withdraw; and, leaving the company in the midſt of their mirth, as ſoon as I found myſelf alone, I poured out my heart in gratitude to the Giver of joy as well as ſorrow, and then ſlept undiſturbed till morning.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

The Concluſion.

THE next morning, as ſoon as I awaked, I found my eldeſt ſon ſitting by my bed ſide, who came to increaſe my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. Firſt having releaſed me from the ſettlement that I had made the day before in his favour, he let me know, that my merchant who had failed in town, was arreſted at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generoſity pleaſed me almoſt as much as this unlooked-for good fortune. But I had ſome doubts whether I ought in juſtice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinion was, that, as my ſon was already poſſeſſed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any heſitation. His buſineſs, however, was to inform me, that as he had the night before ſent for the licences, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuſe my aſſiſtance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were ſpeaking, to tell us that the meſſenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found the whole company as merry as affluence and innocence could make them. How-

ever, as they were now preparing for a very ſolemn ceremony, their laughter entirely diſpleaſed me. I told them of the grave, becoming and ſublime deportment they ſhould aſſume upon this myſtical occaſion, and read them two homilies and a theſis of my own compoſing, in order to prepare them; yet they ſtill ſeemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forſaken them, and I was often tempted to turn back in indignation. In church a new dilemma aroſe, which promiſed no eaſy ſolution. This was, which couple ſhould be married firſt; my ſon's bride warmly inſiſted, that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) ſhould take the lead; but this the other refuſed with equal ardour, proteſting ſhe would not be guilty of ſuch rudeneſs for the world. The argument was ſupported for ſome time between both, with equal obſtinacy and good breeding. But as I ſtood all this time with my book ready, I was at laſt quite tired of the conteſt; and, ſhutting it, "I perceive," cried I, "that none of you have "a mind to be married, and I think we had as "good go back again; for I ſuppoſe there will "be no buſineſs done here to-day."——This at once reduced them to reaſon. The Baronet and his Lady were firſt married, and then my ſon and his lovely partner.

I had previouſly, that morning, given orders that a coach ſhould be ſent for my honeſt neighbour Flamborough and his family; by which means, upon

upon our return to the inn, we had the pleaſure of finding the two Miſs Flamboroughs alighted before us. Mr. Jenkinſon gave his hand to the eldeſt, and my ſon Moſes led up the other; (and I have ſince found, that he has taken a real liking to the girl, and my conſent and bounty he ſhall have, whenever he thinks proper to demand them.) We were no ſooner returned to the inn, but numbers of my pariſhioners, hearing of my ſucceſs, came to congratulate me; but among the reſt were thoſe who roſe to reſcue me, and whom I formerly rebuked with ſuch ſharpneſs. I told the ſtory to Sir William, my ſon-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great ſeverity; but, finding them quite diſheartened by his harſh reproof, he gave them half a-guinea a-piece to drink his health, and raiſe their dejected ſpirits.

Soon after this, we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dreſſed by Mr. Thornhill's cook. And it may not be improper to obſerve, with reſpect to that gentleman, that he now reſides in quality of companion at a relation's houſe, being very well liked, and ſeldom ſitting at the ſide-table, except when there is no room at the other; for they make no ſtranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in ſpirits, and in learning to blow the French-horn. My eldeſt daughter, however, ſtill remembers him with regret; and ſhe has even told me, though I make a

great

great ſecret of it, that when he reforms, ſhe may be brought to relent. But to return, for I am not apt to digreſs thus, when we were to ſit down to dinner, our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The queſtion was, whether my eldeſt daughter, as being a matron, ſhould not ſit above the two young brides? But the debate was cut ſhort by my ſon George, who propoſed, that the company ſhould ſit indiſcriminately, every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife, who, I could perceive, was not perfectly ſatisfied, as ſhe expected to have had the pleaſure of ſitting at the head of the table, and carving all the meat, for all the company. But notwithſtanding this, it is impoſſible to deſcribe our good humour. I can't ſay whether we had more wit amongſt us now than uſual; but I am certain we had more laughing, which anſwered the end as well. One jeſt I particularly remember. Old Mr. Wilmot drinking to Moſes, whoſe head was turned another way, my ſon replied, "Madam, "I thank you."—Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the reſt of the company, obſerved, that he was thinking of his miſtreſs. At which jeſt I thought the two Miſs Flamboroughs would have died with laughing. As ſoon as dinner was over, according to my old cuſtom, I requeſted that the table might be taken away, to have the pleaſure of ſeeing all my family aſſembled once more by a cheerful fire-ſide. My two little ones ſat upon each knee, the reſt of the company by their

partners.

partners. I had nothing now on this ſide the grave to wiſh for; all my cares were over; my pleaſure was unſpeakable. It now only remained, that my gratitude in good fortune ſhould exceed my former ſubmiſſion in adverſity.

THE END.

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